

**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PARANÁ**

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**THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN JAMAICA:  
A CARTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE  
NARRATIVES AMONGST CREOLE-SPEAKING TEACHERS OF  
SPANISH.**

**THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN JAMAICA: A CARTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE NARRATIVES AMONGST CREOLE-SPEAKING  
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**2017**

**CURITIBA**

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A CARTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE NARRATIVES  
AMONGST CREOLE-SPEAKING TEACHERS OF SPANISH.**

Tese apresentada como requisito parcial à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Letras, no Curso de Pós-Graduação em Linguística, Setor de Ciências Humanas, da Universidade Federal do Paraná.

Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Clarissa Menezes Jordão

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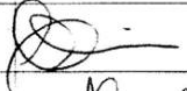
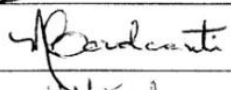
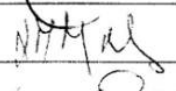
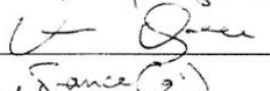
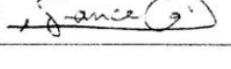


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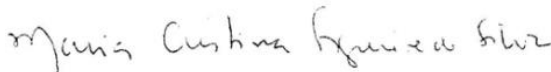
## PARECER

Defesa de tese de doutorado de **Maria Teresa Sanchez Alcolea** para obtenção do título de **Doutora em Letras**.

Os abaixo-assinados Clarissa Menezes Jordão, Presidente, Marilda Cavalcanti, Lynn Mario Trindade Menezes de Souza, Francisco Carlos Fogaça e Francisco Javier Calvo Del Olmo arguíram, nesta data, a candidata, que apresentou a tese **"The Language Situation in Jamaica: a Cartographic Exploration of Language Narratives Amongst Creole-Speaking Teachers of Spanish"**. Procedida a arguição segundo o protocolo que foi aprovado pelo Colegiado do Curso, a Banca é de parecer que a candidata está apta ao título de **Doutora em Letras**, conforme especificações abaixo:

Banca	Assinatura	APROVADA Não APROVADA
Dr <sup>a</sup> . Clarissa Menezes Jordão (Presidente)		APROVADA
Dr <sup>a</sup> . Marilda Cavalcanti		APROVADA
Dr. Lynn Mario Trindade Menezes de Souza		APROVADA
Dr. Francisco Carlos Fogaça		APROVADA
Dr. Francisco Javier Calvo Del Olmo		APROVADA

Curitiba, 22 de junho de 2017.



Prof<sup>a</sup>. Dr<sup>a</sup>. Maria Cristina Figueiredo Silva  
Coordenadora do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras



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Ata octingentésima nona, referente à sessão pública de defesa de tese para a obtenção de título de doutora a que se submeteu a doutoranda **Maria Teresa Sanchez Alcolea**. No dia vinte e dois de junho de dois mil e dezessete, às catorze horas, na sala 1013 no 10º andar, no Setor de Ciências Humanas da Universidade Federal do Paraná, foram instalados os trabalhos da Banca Examinadora, constituída pelos seguintes Professores Doutores: Clarissa Menezes Jordão, Presidente, Marilda Cavalcanti (por skype), Lynn Mario Trindade Menezes de Souza e Francisco Carlos Fogaça e Francisco Javier Calvo Del Olmo designados pelo Colegiado do Curso de Pós-Graduação em Letras, para a sessão pública de defesa de tese intitulada **"The Language Situation in Jamaica: a Cartographic Exploration of Language Narratives Amongst Creole-Speaking Teachers of Spanish"**, apresentada por **Maria Teresa Sanchez Alcolea**. A sessão teve início com a apresentação oral da doutoranda sobre o estudo desenvolvido. Logo após, a senhora presidente dos trabalhos concedeu a palavra a cada um dos examinadores para as suas arguições. Em seguida, a candidata apresentou sua defesa. Na sequência, a Professora Clarissa Menezes Jordão retomou a palavra para as considerações finais. Na continuação, a Banca Examinadora, reunida sigilosamente, decidiu pela aprovação da candidata. Em seguida, a senhora Presidente declarou **APROVADA** a candidata, que recebeu o título de **Doutora em Letras**, área de concentração **Estudos Linguísticos**. A versão final da tese deverá ser encaminhada à Coordenação em até 60 dias. Encerrada a sessão, lavrou-se a presente ata, que vai assinada pela Banca Examinadora e pela candidata. Feita em Curitiba, no dia vinte e dois de junho de dois mil e dezessete.

  
Dr. Clarissa Menezes Jordão

  
Dr. Marilda Cavalcanti

  
Dr. Lynn Mario T. Menezes de Souza

  
Dr. Francisco Carlos Fogaça

  
Dr. Francisco Javier Calvo Del Olmo

  
Maria Teresa Sanchez Alcolea

*To my family, who have loved me through the entire process and despite the distance.*

*To my son Pedro Rafael, light of my life; wind beneath my wings.*

*To Wynter, who passed before the celebration, but contributed his dream to the offering.*

*To Jamaica, fertile soil for these ideas.*

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*Merely to name them is the prose  
Of diarists, to make you a name  
For readers who like travellers praise  
Their beds and beaches as the same;  
But islands can only exist  
If we have loved in them.  
(Derek Walcott)*



## **RESUMO**

### **Panorama Linguístico da Jamaica: Cartografia de narrativas de linguagem entre professores de espanhol falantes de crioulo jamaicano**

Jamaica, uma das Antilhas Maiores do Caribe, compartilha com outras ilhas da região uma história de colonização, imigração e encontro de culturas que tem resultado na criação de uma cultura diversa e uma língua crioula. Como fenômeno integrador de cultura e história na sociedade, o crioulo jamaicano gera interesses múltiplos, segundo mostram a diversidade de estudos sobre essa língua e as diferentes questões de pesquisa em campos acadêmicos diversos, incluindo a linguística, a educação, a sociologia, a filosofia, entre outros. Seguindo um método cartográfico apoiado com o fundamento teórico da uma análise rizomática (Deleuze e GUATTARI, 1978), a tese apresenta um estudo panorâmico sobre o crioulo jamaicano, visando encontrar pontos de encontro entre a visão rizomática proposta para entender o desenvolvimento da língua jamaicana e os dados gerados a partir de entrevistas com os professores participantes.

A tese discute aspectos diversos relacionados com a língua crioula jamaicana e apresenta uma interpretação de narrativas baseada nas percepções e concepções de língua prevalentes entre professores de espanhol como língua estrangeira na ilha. Estes professores compartilham com a autora interesses profissionais, especificamente por serem professores de línguas, o que aporta uma perspectiva diferente, dado que, ao considerar os assuntos das línguas, tanto os participantes quanto a autora estão incluindo pontos de vista que incluem a língua como um produto sociohistórico de amplo uso social e a língua como objeto de ensino. As narrativas interpretadas, portanto, incluem as experiências e ângulos pessoais de professores falantes nativos do crioulo jamaicano que têm informação de primeira mão sobre a realidade social dessa língua e sobre o seu impacto sobre a língua estrangeira que eles ensinam (espanhol). Consequentemente, a pesquisa sobre as narrativas compartilhadas e pessoais dos professores participantes mostra visões nascidas das experiências profissionais como professores de língua, e das suas próprias vidas dentro do contexto jamaicano.

Conduzido entre professores jamaicanos que trabalham no contexto de educação secundária na Jamaica, o estudo conduz à interpretação de que esses participantes compartilham narrativas que têm a ver com a sua vida profissional e social, segundo há sido inferido de observações nas escolas, dos seus critérios e ideias nas entrevistas e conversas. Igualmente, a tese apresenta uma interpretação dos pontos de encontro entre as narrativas dos participantes com aquelas encontradas em publicações da mídia, as redes sociais, e conversas com pessoas proeminentes da sociedade jamaicana.

O fato de não ser falante do crioulo jamaicano colocou à pesquisadora no papel de “outsider”. No entanto, esse papel contribuiu para enriquecer o processo devido à experiência profissional e pessoal da autora como professora de espanhol e moradora da Jamaica há mais de 20 anos. Essa informação e vivências tem contribuído no desenvolvimento da própria narrativa da autora e conformaram uma outra perspectiva possível para interpretar o rico contexto jamaicano e as suas contradições lógicas.

#### **Palavras-chave:**

Crioulo. Rizoma. Crioulização. Descrioulização. Transcrioulização. Ensino. Espanhol. Jamaica. Narrativa. Percepções. Concepções de Língua. Cartografia.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Language Situation in Jamaica: A Cartographic Exploration of Language Narratives amongst Creole-speaking Teachers of Spanish**

Jamaica, one of the largest islands in the Caribbean, shares a history of colonization, immigration and culture convergence with other islands in the region, which has resulted in the creation of a diverse culture and a Creole language. As a phenomenon of sociocultural and sociohistorical integration, Jamaican Creole generates multiple interests; as shown by the diversity of language studies and the various research interests in several academic fields, including Linguistics, Education, Sociology, Philosophy, among others. Based on a cartographic approach, as proposed in DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1978) the thesis discusses various aspects pertaining to the language situation in Jamaica, especially the matter of Jamaican Creole, and presents an interpretation of narratives based on the language perceptions and conceptions prevailing amongst teachers of Spanish as a foreign language in the island.

The thesis presents a discussion on various aspects pertaining to Jamaican Creole and an interpretation of participant's narratives about such situation, based on a study of the most prevalent language conceptions and perceptions found in this particular group composed of Jamaican Creole speakers involved in the teaching of Spanish in the island. The participating teachers and the author share common professional interests due to the fact that, being language teachers, they bring forth a different perspective to the discussion and analysis of language matters, particularly in connection with the socio-historical nature of languages and their use in education. The narratives interpreted, therefore, include the experiences and personal angles of teachers, who are native speakers of Jamaican Creole and who also have first-hand information about the social reality of that language, as well as its impact on the foreign language they teach (Spanish). Consequently, the research delved on the shared and personal narratives of language professionals, as views emerging from their personal and professional experiences within the context of Jamaica.

After presenting a panoramic study of the language situation in Jamaica, based on a rhizomatic view of language development, the thesis discusses the data generated from interviews and unstructured conversations with Secondary Education Spanish teachers, most of whom are operating within a sociolinguistic context characterized by the presence of two languages: English (the official language of education) and Creole (the popular language). The study leads to the interpretation that these participants share narratives that involve their professional and social lives, as inferred from observations at their work spaces, their criteria and the ideas presented during interviews and conversations. Furthermore, the thesis presents an interpretation of connecting points between participant's narratives and those found in media publications, social network debates, and conversations with prominent Jamaicans. The fact of not being a Jamaican Creole speaker puts the researcher in a role of an "outsider". However, such role contributed to enrich the process due to the professional and personal experience of the author as a Spanish teacher and resident of Jamaica for more than 20 years. The sharing of information and experiences have contributed in the development of her own narrative and has brought forth yet another perspective to interpret the rich and multiple Jamaican context and its logical contradictions.

#### **Keywords:**

Creole. Rhizome. Creolization. Decreolization. Transcreolization. Teaching. Spanish. Jamaica. Narrative. Perceptions. Conceptions of language. Cartography

## **RESUMEN**

### **Panorama Lingüístico de Jamaica: Estudio Cartográfico de narrativas sobre el lenguaje entre profesores de español hablantes del criollo jamaicano.**

Jamaica, una Antillas Mayores, comparte con otras islas del Caribe una historia de colonización, inmigración y encuentro de culturas que ha dado lugar a la creación de una cultura diversa y una lengua criolla. Como fenómeno integrador de cultura e historia en la sociedad, el criollo jamaicano genera múltiples intereses, según muestra la diversidad de estudios sobre el lenguaje y los distintos problemas de investigación en varios campos académicos, incluyendo la educación, la sociología, la lingüística, la filosofía, entre otros. Siguiendo un método cartográfico, basado en el fundamento teórico que ofrece el análisis rizomático (DELEUZE y GUATTARI, 1978), la tesis presenta un estudio panorámico sobre el criollo jamaicano, que tiene por objetivo encontrar y analizar puntos comunes entre la visión rizomática que se propone, para analizar el desarrollo del lenguaje jamaicano, y los datos generados a partir de entrevistas con los profesores participantes.

La tesis analiza diversos aspectos relacionados con la lengua criolla de Jamaica y presenta una interpretación de narrativas, en base a algunas percepciones y concepciones de lenguaje que existen entre los profesores de español participantes. Estos docentes comparten intereses profesionales con la autora, específicamente por el hecho de ser profesores de lenguas extranjeras. Tal hecho genera una perspectiva diferente, dado que, tanto los participantes como la autora aportan puntos de vistas que consideran aspectos del lenguaje como un producto sociohistórico de amplio uso social, incluyendo la educación. Las narrativas interpretadas, por tanto, incluyen experiencias y ángulos personales de profesores que son hablantes de criollo jamaicano, por lo que tienen información de primera mano sobre la realidad social de ese idioma y su impacto en la lengua extranjera que imparten (español).

En consecuencia, la investigación sobre narrativas compartidas y personales de los profesores participantes muestra visiones relacionadas con las experiencias profesionales y de vivencia de los participantes dentro del contexto jamaicano. Sus experiencias y puntos de vista han conducido a una interpretación de narrativas, apoyada no solamente en los criterios e ideas presentados en las entrevistas, sino también en observaciones cartográficas del entorno característicos de sus escuelas. Al mismo tiempo, la tesis presenta una interpretación de los puntos de encuentro entre las narrativas de los participantes y las emergentes de publicaciones de los medios, redes sociales y conversaciones con personalidades de la sociedad jamaicana.

El hecho de no ser hablante de criollo jamaicano puso a la autora en un rol de "outsider". Sin embargo, esa función contribuyó a enriquecer el proceso debido a su experiencia personal y profesional como profesora de español y residente de Jamaica durante más de 20 años. Esta información y experiencia ha contribuido en el desarrollo de su propia narrativa, a la vez que aporta otra perspectiva posible para interpretar el rico y múltiple contexto jamaicano y sus contradicciones lógicas.

#### **Palabras clave:**

Criollo. Rizoma. Criollización. Descriollización. Transcriollización. Enseñanza. Español. Jamaica. Narrativa. Percepciones. Concepciones de lenguaje. Cartografía.

## DI DRIFF

### **Di langwidge situation inna Jamaica: Mappin out how di teeche dem weh tawk patwa as dem native langwidge but dem teeche Spanish view Patwa.**

Jamaica a wanna di biggess ailan inna di Caribbean an dem an di adda ailan dem inna di region ave di same istry a colonization an immigration, an dem copy tings from deh wanna nedda. A succum dem kultcha become suh mix up mix up, an a it mek dem ave patwa as a langwidge. Patwa great inna most people eye wen yuh considde di social an cultural fakta plus di social an istorical side a tings as well. Everybody interestid inna Patwa an yuh cyan si dat because a nuff study dem duh pan it, people weh interestid inna langwidge, Education, peeple weh study society, knowlidge an life an nuff more tings, study patwa. DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1978) suggess wan way fi duh research weh name cartography, i basically mean seh yaahgo map tings out, a it deh study yah use fi pree di langwidge situation inna Jamaica, exprecially Patwa, an di study explain certain tings base pa'how di Jamaican teeche dem weh teeche Spanish feel bout Patwa.

Deh study yah discuss wol heep a tings bout Patwa an it show yuh a meds bout how di participants dem feel bout it, an di study show yuh dem ting yah base pan di most common feelins weh dis particular group have wen i come to Patwa. An yuh dun know seh is a group a Jamaican Patwa-tawking teeche weh teeche Spanish rait a yaad yah. Di teeche dem an di summady weh duh deh study yah have nuff tings in common wen yaah talk bout dem job because di wol a dem a teeche an dat a lone mean she dem kinda bring a different meds to di wol langwidge ting, exprecially if yaah tawk bout di social and history side a langwidge and how yuh use dem wen yaah deal wid tings fi duh wid education. From yuh hear dat yuh dun know seh anything wi tell yuh, wi tell yuh base offa weh di teeche dem seh base pan dem own experience and feelins bout di matta. Plus, yuh know seh dem a Jamaican teeche weh tawk patwa from dem baan suh dem know firs han how peeple really treat pawta, plus dem know how it affeck tings wen dem a teeche wan foreign langwidge like Spanish. Aarait, suh, di study use weh di teeche dem seh (buot weh di wol a dem agree pan an weh each a dem seh fi demself) fi get to di meet a di matta.

After wi lay out everything clear clear bout di langwidge situation inna Jamaica, base offa wan view weh dem use fi study how langwidge cum about weh dem call rhizomatic, weh mean seh langwidge can develop from different roots an levels, deh study yah discuss di response dem weh wi get from di interview dem an di conversation dem weh wi ave wid di teeche dem weh teeche Spanish inna di high school dem. Most a dem deh teeche deh come from wan settings weh a two langwidge di people dem tawk, wan a English, di wan weh dem use inna di skool dem, and di adda wan a Patwa, di wan weh almost all a people dem tawk. Di study lead up to wan andastandin seh di wol a di participant dem have similar experience, buot inna dem workplace an inna dem home an community surroundin, an wi realize dis base offa weh dem seh inna di interview dem an wen wi tawk to dem. Not ongle dat, but di study lead to wan andastandin of how weh di participants dem seh connect wid weh dem always seh pan tv, an pan social media an weh sum a di big shot people dem always seh. Di fack seh di person weh a duh deh study ere nuh tawk Patwa mean seh yuh can basically call di person wan "outsaida". But di fack seh di person a wan outsaida add supm to di wol experience because of di professional an personal experience weh di person ave, because shi teeche Spanish inna Jamaica an live deh fi ova 20 years. Because shi share infamation an experience wid di participants dem shi andastan di wol Pawta ting even betta now an can explain di nitty gritty a it much betta.

#### **Key word dem:**

Patwa. Rhizome. Creolization. Decreolization. Transcreolization. Teaching. Spanish. Jamaica. Di way people si tings. Feelins bout tings. How people si di langwidge. Mappin Out

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This doctoral thesis is presented with the intention of attaining a Doctorate Degree in Applied Linguistics. The study of the language situation of Jamaica, including a discussion on the narratives shared amongst language professionals, involved an interdisciplinary approach aimed at grasping a portion of the multiplicity of stances concerning this subject matter. Alongside the matter of language, seen as a sociolinguist space, the study evolved by stepping into the inroads of other fields of study, namely sociology, philosophy, psychology, ethnography, narratology, foreign language methodology, and historiography. The thesis presents a cartographic study of Jamaican Creole<sup>1</sup> users' narratives, based on their points of view, language conceptions and perceptions, and in connection with the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in Jamaica. Each of those elements has profited from the theoretical and methodological contributions of the fields previously mentioned, and has drawn from research principles shared by those fields, as well. Cartography is known for its all-encompassing research methodology, which feeds from any and every element encountered on the field. Hence, the final product presents personal and shared narratives of participants who work and live in the particular sociocultural context of Jamaica, in their interconnection with the personal narrative of the researcher, a Spanish teacher in Jamaica herself.

It is undeniable that the studies previously mentioned present an ideal mixture of specialized knowledge and theories that have proven tremendously useful for the cartographic study presented here. Furthermore, it would be safe to argue that the research conducted among Jamaican Creole users who specialize in the teaching of Spanish, the exploration of their conceptions, perceptions and narratives around Jamaican Creole, as transpired from their reports on their perceived connection between the language situation in Jamaica and the teaching of Spanish in the island, would have been a futile exercise without considering a combination of principles of educational psychology, foreign language studies, as well as sociocultural and ethnographic studies. Obviously, this thesis aligns with a multidisciplinary paradigm, considering that it is paramount referring to several fields of study for contributions that do help broadening the perspective presented and do offer better substance to the issues being discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> Despite not being ideal, considering the line of thought followed in this thesis, the author has opted for using the term "Jamaican Creole" instead of "Jamaican", which would have been the logical choice following a rhizomatic analytical perspective to discuss the language situation in Jamaica. It is preferable, at this time, to align with the academic discourse around this matter, though aware that the use of standard terminology is not an indication of a kind of academic "surrender" of the author's stance, but a strategy to be heard in traditional academic circles.

Likewise, the road followed in order to produce this thesis has been supported by inroads into Jamaican history, ethnography, folklore, music, literature and politics, aside from the author's living and working experience in the island. All of the above has served to accumulate a wealth of information that motivated developing this research, and helped in the design of punctual research instruments for data generation, through a qualitative research process that followed a cartographic approach. Those instruments were essential for generating the data and gathering a considerable amount of qualitative information leading towards the results presented through this thesis. Such approach was supported and enriched with principles of ethnographic and educational research traditions.

Another contending issue was the assumed lack of need for this type of study. That feeling came either from the selection of Jamaica as the field of research or from the very pertinence of exploring language narratives among Jamaican teachers ....of Spanish!? Such assumptions marred the process not only because the research was seen as an intrusion by certain institutions that still find it sinful to view Jamaican Creole as a genuine language, but also because there are several individuals who prefer to continue attached to the idea that being an educated person equates to being versed in Standard English. Both the institutions and persons alluded above would consider this study a waste of time, given their belief of an established "superiority" and "adequacy" of Standard Jamaican English as compared to Jamaican Creole.

Fortunately, the literature review and the actual encounter at the field helped disperse most of the doubts and negativity attracted by the referred language attitudes and that, for a moment, resulted a bit discouraging and militated against the researcher's intention to carry out this study. Careful and dedicated observation of the Jamaican society, and the critical reading of the literature around the matter researched, allowed breaking away from that colonially mindful narrative shared by some institutions and which seems to be replicated, in many cases, through language conceptions, perceptions and beliefs that manage to make their way into the teaching practices of many. Criticality lead to the realisation that, indeed, there is value in this research, mainly because of its contribution to present a different angle of analysis concerning the matter of Jamaican Creole, its speakers, and the teaching of foreign languages like Spanish.

This thesis is the offspring of the author's love for Jamaica, the Jamaican Creole language, foreign language teaching in general, and Spanish teaching and learning in particular. It is such love that motivated the research and ended up engendering this thesis. Nonetheless, there is awareness that this is one step, an intermediary plateau ((DELEUZE & GUATTARI,

1987), along the road leading to a deeper knowledge about the matters researched, particularly the teaching of Spanish, within the complex language context of Jamaica.

### **1.1. Thesis Overview**

This general introduction has the purpose of presenting an overview of the entire thesis, including the main or overarching goal pursued in the study, as well as the motivation behind the selection of this research topic (Section 1.3). There is also here a brief discussion about socio-historical issues, as well as aspects of the Jamaican system of ideas and beliefs that shape ideological and perceptual positioning around the matter of Jamaican Creole language and its users, showing the pertinence of stretching the study to other disciplines beyond the field of linguistics (Section 1.4.). This section also presents a brief description of the contents of each chapter (Section 1.5.).

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

#### **1.2.1. Overarching Goal**

Based on the cartographic approach leading the research process, no specific outcomes were expected. The research pursued the overarching goal of “exploring personal and shared language narratives among Jamaican Creole users who are currently teaching Spanish in Jamaica”. Certainly the pool of possible participants for a research on language narratives in Jamaica is ample and promising, but practical reasons dictated the option of a narrower pool (Spanish teachers) in order to unveil narratives emanating from a specific group of professionals dedicated to the teaching of a foreign language (an attribute shared with the researcher), and whose language expertise may bring forth a different (perhaps more specialised) perspective on the matter being researched. The achievement of this overarching goal allowed creating a perceptual map showing the knowledge created in the process. Such perceptual map is expected to contribute to the fostering of a different understanding of the language situation of Jamaica and its impact on teachers’ methodological choices and Spanish teaching practices.

The referred overarching goal sprung from discussions about the pertinence of acquiring knowledge about the underlying language perceptions and conceptions, as well as beliefs, ideas and even, passions among Jamaican Creole users who are Spanish teachers, based on the assumption that there may be a connection between those seldom uttered language issues and Spanish teaching methodological considerations. This study, therefore, concentrated on acquiring knowledge about how Spanish teachers who are users of Jamaican Creole perceive the language situation of Jamaica, and whether they perceive there is a connection between that language situation and Spanish teaching and learning processes. At the same, based on a

cartographic approach, the researcher sought an understanding of the manner in which teachers' language perceptions, conceptions, beliefs, and attitudes impact their teaching practices.

The research process relied mostly on interviews and unstructured conversations, which were seen as narratives (CONNELLY & CLANDININ (1990); JENKINS (2013)) of participants'<sup>2</sup> personal stories as individuals and in connection with their social and working contexts. The cartographic approach applied to this qualitative research was paramount in ascertaining all possible sources of information, including participants' personal narratives, as well as those narratives that transpired from their working contexts. Those methodological instruments were remarkable, as they served as valid ways for creating knowledge leading towards the achievement of the overarching research goal. During the interviews and conversations, the participants and the researcher held fruitful discussions that allowed creating a perceptual cartographic map on the prevailing language perceptions, conceptions and narratives among those Spanish teachers. The research process evidenced a multiple and rich diversity of personal perceptions, conceptions and narratives among participants, which were afterwards triangulated with the opinions voiced by other participants who are in positions of governmental authority, or who have carried out similar researches, as well as with the social narratives pouring out of media publications and social networks debates.

The cartographic approach to which the research adhered opened space for the diversity referred above; hence, positions asserting that Jamaican Creole is merely a corruption of Standard English were deemed as valid as those participants' positions portraying a passionate advocacy of their "Mother Tongue", and as valid as all the other positions in between. The cartographic map created is broad, indeed, and it shows how the manner in which Jamaican Creole is regarded (as a language or not) has a bearing on Spanish lessons, given that some participants deny its value in the teaching process, while others emphasize that learning would be hampered if Jamaican Creole, as the learners' Mother Tongue, were dismissed from the academic process.

However, the perceptual map created during this research process extended beyond the issue of Spanish teaching in Jamaica, given that the personal and shared narratives of the participating cohort (age group 25-35,) also reflected the considerable multiplicity of narratives

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<sup>2</sup> The word 'participant' is preferred, instead of terms such as "informants", because the cartographic research approach followed involves a sharing of information, notions, stands between participants and researcher, rather than a passive reporting by "informants" when prompted by the researcher. During the research, participants' initiatives were welcomed, and many interviews evolved following a natural conversation flow, creating new questions along the way.

grasped from observations of the Jamaican society at large. A possible explanation for such mirroring of the Jamaican narrative landscape may reside on the fact that the generation included in the 25-35 age group has grown up in the midst of intense language debates in the island that continue to this date. Chapters 2 and 3 bring more details about this.

### **1.2.2. Specific Targets**

The road towards the overarching goal required completing specific targets that helped enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the matter researched. The specific targets aimed at during the research process were the following:

1. Exploring language narratives among Jamaican Creole users who are currently teaching Spanish in the island. Interviews were specifically aimed at eliciting as much information as possible from participants' contributions. This specific target involved a considerable amount of time, as discussions were deep, and the participants-researcher exchanges at times extended beyond the specific issue of Spanish language teaching.
2. Studying the extent to which participants' language attitudes in respect to Jamaican Creole manifested during the interview process, and how such attitudes also manifested on the teaching practices and methodological choices participants communicated.
3. Delving into Creole-speaking Spanish teachers' narratives so as to discuss at their connection with the overall picture of the language landscape of the island, as reflected through other sources such as mass media publications and social networks debates, among others. Such analysis provided material for the author's interpretation of general social narratives, as distilled from data sources found in mass media and social networks, showing a connection with the specific narratives of the participating teachers. Completing this target facilitated a wider vision concerning Spanish teaching practices within the Jamaican context, particularly the multiple criteria derived from discussions about the language issue in Jamaica, as well as the impact and value (or not) of Jamaican Creole for teaching and learning Spanish.
4. Interpreting and analysing personal and shared narratives emerging from personal discussions with Jamaican-Creole speakers who are teaching Spanish in Jamaica, not only as existing within such specific context but also as reflections of the general social narratives that may be perceived in Jamaica as a whole. This target involved a combination of desk reviews, discussions in the field, observation of information trends through printed and online media publications, as well as social network discussions.

### **1.3. Research Motivation**

The specific targets described above (particularly 1 & 2) were designed mainly with the purpose of finding answers leading to achieving the overarching goal. Obtaining knowledge

about personal and shared narratives among Creole-speaking Spanish teachers, as well as the possible impact of the language situation of Jamaica on Spanish teaching and learning.

Target # 3 was motivated by the researcher's assumption that the perceived language attitudes in Jamaica could have a relation with the (explicit and implicit) Creole-speaking Spanish teachers' language conceptions and perceptions this research intended to unveil. Observations in the Jamaican society hinted at a potential wealth of information that could be generated from discussions aimed at attaining a deeper understanding of the factors that operate in the psychology of teachers; most of which may be filtered through their methodological choices. Target # 3 also aimed at knowing possible reasons for those teaching practices that disregard the language situation in Jamaica.

Targets 4 & 5 were motivated by the researcher's perception that some of the Spanish teaching issues observed in Jamaica, particularly concerning learning deficiencies, could perhaps be linked to perceived narrow approaches shown in curricular guidelines. Document reviews show that the theoretical considerations and teaching strategies presented in the national and institutional curricula have failed to contemplate a language inclusive perspective that would create space for Jamaican Creole as a relevant aspect in learners' educational growth<sup>3</sup>.

#### **1.4. Language Focus**

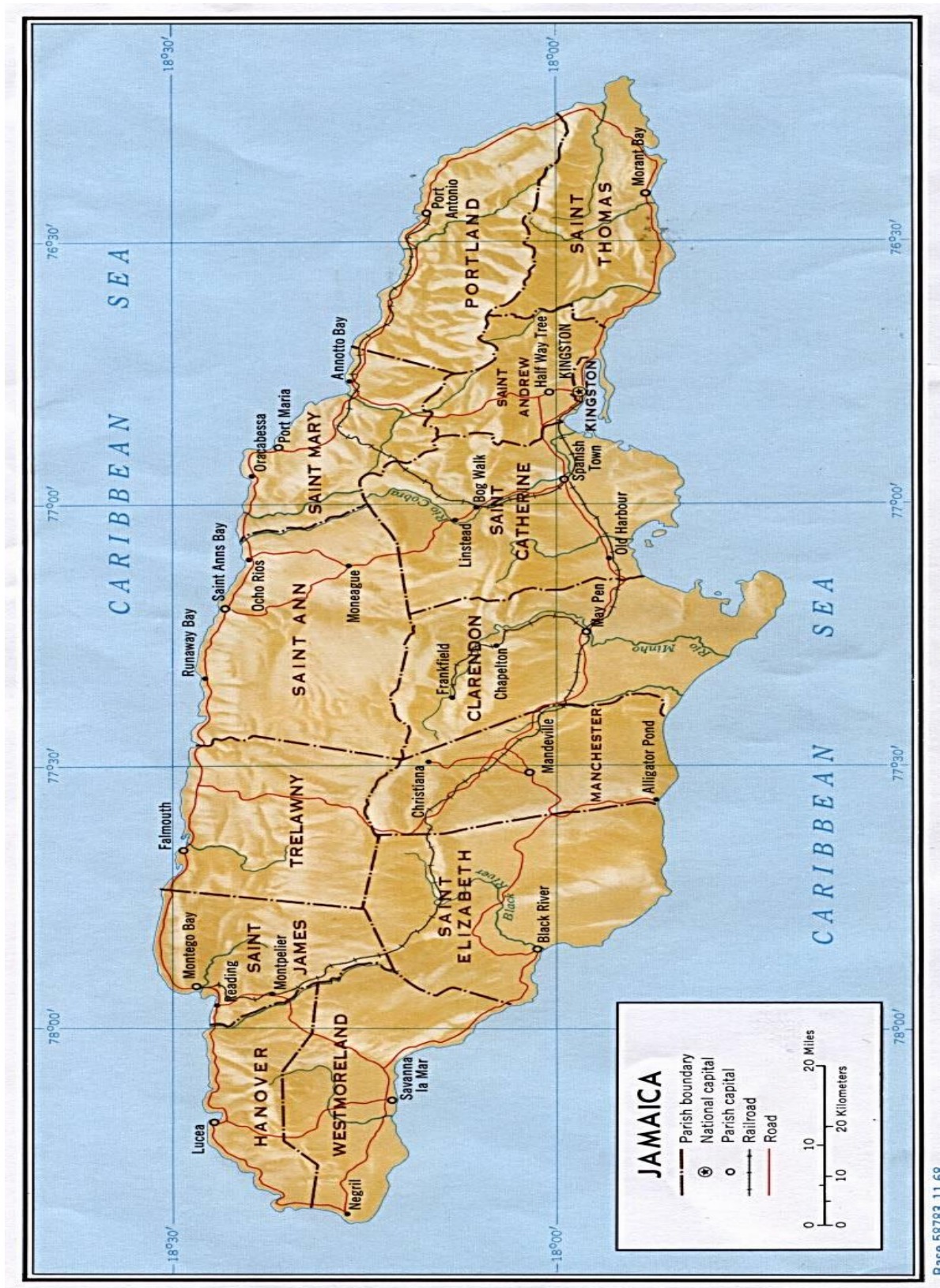
The Caribbean island of Jamaica shows a language situation that attracts interest mainly due to the presence of two functioning languages<sup>4</sup> in almost all aspects of life in the island: Standard Jamaican English, known as the official language of Jamaica, and Jamaican Creole, defined as the "home Language" in the Educational Language Policy (2001). The remarkable presence of those two languages may be regarded as an outcome of the sociolinguistic mixture that has originated from the socio-historical evolution of the island.

Jamaican Creole is a language in evolution, a social product in constant development that may be seen as a rhizome (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987), growing out of the socio-

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<sup>3</sup> There is a heated social debate on this matter (See Annexes B, C, D & E).

<sup>4</sup> I am focusing mainly on the two major languages used in Jamaica, Jamaican Standard English (JsE) and Jamaican Creole (JC). However, albeit among minorities, there are other spoken languages in the island, mostly relating to immigrant groups (French and Haitian Creole (Haitians); Spanish (mostly Cubans) Cantonese (Chinese), Hindi (Indians), among others.



Map of Jamaica. Source:

<https://www.google.com.jm/search?q=map+of+jamaica+showing+parishes&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiU9rSMypXVAhUDNiYKHcxlDeEQsAQIIw&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=vy2u6AxmgUCd4M>



historical contact occurred. Jamaican Creole has been studied from diverse angles. BAILEY (1953,1966) and DURRLEMAN (2008) present discussions about the characteristic language syntax; PATRICK(1999) studied the factors that show Jamaican Creole stabilization in urban areas; which by the way belies theories proposing a notion of “decreolization”; CASSIDY<sup>5</sup> (1961) and LEPAGE (1960) present seminal linguistic studies on the social and formal aspects of the language; and the historical reflections in LALLA & D’COSTA (1990) prove that, despite its relatively recent irruption into Jamaica’s language landscape<sup>6</sup>, Jamaican Creole shows a notable stability in its phonological, morphological, lexical and grammatical aspects.

Noteworthy as well, is the growing social use of Jamaican Creole, to the extent that it is not erroneous to point out the social function of the language. That is, the functions of Jamaican Creole have ostensibly extended beyond the home, family and informal contexts, where it had originated, to important social and cultural areas such as education, politics and the media. Speakers’ social use of Jamaican Creole has been unveiled from empiric observations of the Jamaican society pointing towards a solid and extensive growth. Hitherto, this researcher’s studies about the growing use of Jamaican Creole have shown a connection with sociohistorical and sociocultural factors that seem to have contributed to fostering language consolidation in formal contexts such as universities, parliament, judicial courts, political rallies and the media<sup>7</sup>.

Of major interest for this research were the language perceptions and conceptions shared by Jamaican Creole users. Sociolinguistic observations point at issues of language discrimination against Jamaican Creole; which the researcher interprets as the remnant of a colonial mentality, and which is evidenced in attitudes of rejection towards the language, as well as the tendency to ignore the language situation of the island in some cases. The data generated during this research process indicated that, whichever angle of analysis undertaken

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<sup>5</sup> Cassidy, F. G. *Jamaica Talk: Three Hundred Years of the English Language in Jamaica*. London.

<sup>6</sup> Quite a different matter was the role and status of White missionaries whose activities infuriated the planters during the abolitionist movement (ca. 1770-1838). The period roughly parallels that in which texts of Jamaican Creole first became numerous, the increase in written records being notable after 1880. In part this upsurge in writings by visitors and residents marks a change in European attitudes. ...the missionary influence on Jamaican speech appears in the sermons, prayers, and depositions recorded by missionaries such as the Reverend Mr. Phillippo (LALLA & DACOSTA, 1990, p. 29).

<sup>7</sup>As an example, in 2006, the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy of the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica, started to offer a specialized interpretation course in Jamaican Creole to Standard English, and vice-versa - **Minor in Jamaican Language Public Service Interpreting**. The course was offered in response to the needs of judicial courts when trying Jamaican Creole users: “This Minor in Public Service Interpreting in the Jamaican Language is a programme developed in consonance with the programme initiated by the Chartered Institute of Linguists in the UK. This is a professional qualification which certifies persons to function as official interpreters within the British legal system, including the Law Courts.” (<https://www.mona.uwi.edu/dllp/linguistics/jamlang.htm>)



to deepen the knowledge about Jamaican Creole, needs to consider the language in its holistic dimension; not merely from a the perspective of traditional linguistics. Language users' social attitudes in general, and discriminatory stances in particular, do have implications when aiming at the understanding of Jamaican Creole phenomenon, especially if seen from the perspective of language and education professionals.

Doubtlessly, the field covering Jamaican Creole studies, albeit recent, is a broad one. Therefore, this researcher opted for narrowing the scope of research in order to develop a more effective study of the subject matter. The analysis is focused on the matter of language narratives among Creole-speaking Spanish teachers; considering the value such knowledge may have for enhancing the language and theoretical basis for curricular proposals and teaching practices. Furthermore, this research is intended as a contribution to the knowledge about the language situation of Jamaica; particularly the consideration of Jamaican Creole as a genuine language product which deserves to be acknowledged, not only for personal and affective, but also for social as well as educational purposes.

Aside from the contribution of a sociolinguistic study of Jamaican Creole to the teaching of Spanish within the Jamaican language context, the research delved into the issue of language variation; not from the standpoint of traditional linguistic studies, but based on a rhizomatic perspective; an approach that proposes to view language development as an endless rhizomatic process. Language variation, therefore, is seen here as a natural development process whereby, like a rhizome, a language springs out of other language forms and constitutes a new entity that ought to be seen as a full-fledged and independent language system.

From the point of view of a rhizomatic development, hence, terms such as “mother tongue”, or “official language”, for instance, have no place; as it is the speakers' use that determines language growth. Consequently, all languages ought to be seen as equals, as they are resulting rhizomes of language processes connected to the speakers' use, based on their material and contextual needs. From this perspective all languages undergo similar growth processes; i.e., they grow in the form of radicles that extend beyond established perceived language forms (rhizomes), leading to the creation of new, separate and independent, genuine forms. Hence, it is suitable to argue that the controversial issue of Jamaican Creole status, as a “dialect”, a “derivational form” or a “substandard language version” of Standard English, is a reflection of traditional linguistic models; which see language development as a tree-like binary process.

The rhizomatic perspective used as the basis of this cartographic research approach has offered the researcher important theoretical tools to analyse the Jamaican Creole phenomenon

from a different analytical angle. Such angle has allowed a deeper understanding of Jamaican Creole, starting with a critical review of a term such as “Creole”; which is seen as a marker of a status of inferiority; as compared to other languages traditionally termed as “official languages”, ergo “real languages”. The term “Creole” is loaded with the negativity imprinted from colonial times. Traditional linguistics, not only has perpetuated such negative load by associating Jamaican Creole growth with the “corruption” of other languages, but has also undertaken the task of describing the language and its development through technical definitions that foresee its imminent demise as a result of a process of “decreolization”.

A cartographic study of Jamaican Creole shows a language that enjoys a remarkable vitality; playing an essential role in the transmission of sociocultural values, on account of its extensive use and considerable demography. Jamaican Creole is the language of choice among most Jamaicans. Having transcended the walls erected by historical adversities and socioeconomic disadvantage, its speakers have moved on with their language into social contexts beyond the confinement of home, family and circles of friends. It is the language of Jamaican culture; as may be easily observed in music and theatre productions, as well as poetry, prose, and media channels such as television and radio. It does not stop there, however, the language is also used in formal contexts: parliamentarians resort to it whenever they want to stress their points of view, judges and attorneys use it to communicate with witnesses or the accused, and it is commonplace hearing the language spoken in university campuses and lessons.

Therefore, Jamaican Creole is a language of research interest because it has become a worthy adversary for the “official” language, Standard Jamaican English. The situation arises, then, that nowadays Jamaican speakers make use of both languages anywhere and anytime; which lead the Ministry of Education to classify Jamaica as a bilingual nation<sup>8</sup> in 2001. This extended use of Jamaican Creole, however, does have implications on the teaching and learning processes in Jamaica, as is the case of foreign languages like Spanish<sup>9</sup>.

This researcher’s language interest was also motivated by findings in previous researches aimed at showing the impact of having two, albeit unequally, functioning languages

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<sup>8</sup> See discussion in the policy paper, *Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture Language Education Policy* (November 2001) [http://dlpalmer.weebly.com/uploads/3/5/8/7/3587856/language\\_education\\_policy.pdf](http://dlpalmer.weebly.com/uploads/3/5/8/7/3587856/language_education_policy.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> See discussion in SANCHEZ, et al. *Jamaican Creole: Its Influence on Language Teaching and Learning*. [https://www.academia.edu/12798114/Jamaican\\_Creole\\_Its\\_Influence\\_on\\_Language\\_Teaching\\_and\\_Learning](https://www.academia.edu/12798114/Jamaican_Creole_Its_Influence_on_Language_Teaching_and_Learning), and SANCHEZ, Maria T. *Group Work Strategies in a Jamaican Classroom Setting: What to bear in mind?* [https://www.academia.edu/12812899/Group\\_Work\\_Strategies\\_in\\_a\\_Jamaican\\_Classroom\\_Setting\\_What\\_to\\_bear\\_in\\_mind](https://www.academia.edu/12812899/Group_Work_Strategies_in_a_Jamaican_Classroom_Setting_What_to_bear_in_mind)

in Jamaica. SÁNCHEZ (2007<sup>10</sup>, 2011, 2012) found that there is an established use of Jamaican Creole during academic activities; not merely for informal exchanges among students, but also as a language of instruction, used by lecturers to explain lesson contents when students fail to understand explanations in Standard Jamaican English.

It has been observed that this language situation has an impact on the teaching and learning processes in Jamaica. Such impact has motivated several academics and teachers to propose amendments to the Ministry of Education Language Policy, and the tabling of new legislation pieces concerning Jamaican Creole and its use as a language of instruction for approval in parliament. The proposals concerning changes in the educational language policy in Jamaica are based on several studies showing the urgent need to resolve learning deficiencies by accepting Jamaican (and other Caribbean Creole languages) as languages of instruction and education. Some of those studies include CRAIG, D (2006); DEVONISH, H. & CARPENTER, K. (2007 & 2010); EVANS (2001); JETTKA (2010); MCCOURTIE, L. (1998); POLLARD, V., (1993); ROBERTS. P. (1994); SHIELDS, K. (1989); WHYTE-WILLIAMS, W. P., (2008); among others. Such studies show connections between the language situation in Jamaica and learning deficiencies, especially in the grasping of theoretical concepts and analytical skills; all of which point at serious gaps in an educational system that emphasizes the use of Standard English as a medium of instruction in detriment of the primary language reference of most learners: Jamaican Creole.

Generally, language learning is impacted by the referred language situation, one that involves the teaching-learning of both Standard English as well as foreign languages like Spanish. Hence, the researchers' interest in deepening on the study of this matter; based on the notion that a better and broader understanding of such language situation, and the manner in which language teachers perceive it, may offer suitable referential material for improving language teaching practices in Jamaica. However, it is pertinent to state that there are few studies dealing with the particular relationship between Jamaican Creole and foreign language teaching. Nonetheless, it is suitable to consider the contributions of POLLARD (1993); WATSON, et al (2011); SÁNCHEZ, et al (2011), MATHER, 2011) which present discussions on the specific dynamics of the teaching context in Jamaica, particularly the analyses on alleged "language errors" surfacing during lessons and in written exams. These authors argue that there may be a connection between such "errors" and aspects of the language reference learners carry

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<sup>10</sup> SÁNCHEZ, Maria T. Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Discipline Freshman Composition at the Northern Caribbean University: A Survey Study (UNPUBLISHED)

into the learning process. A reflection derived from such discussions is that classroom activities in Jamaica may be seen as a *sui generis* process, particularly due to the use of Standard Jamaican English as the language of reference to teach theoretical issues to many learners whose actual language background is Jamaican Creole, disregarding the fact that such learners do depart from a different language reference to learn (CHANOCK, 2004:2).

The body of this thesis, in the chapters that follow, presents a further discussion of the matters briefly presented in this introduction. Nonetheless, the author has undertaken the task of writing it, but fully aware that discussions on the issue of Jamaican Creole, as well as the Spanish teachers' language perceptions, conceptions and narratives unveiled during this research process, are intermediary "plateaus" in the development process of such phenomena. Jamaican Creole, as much as any other language, is a malleable and fluid phenomenon, constantly growing and being transformed by speakers' use; hence, studies about it may be viewed as partial and temporary, because there is no such thing as a static or permanent language body. Studies may map just a moment, but use will end up transforming, extending and creating new and multiple language maps.

### **1.5. Thesis Structure**

This thesis includes three chapters, plus a general introduction and conclusive remarks.

Chapter I, called "Language Situation in Jamaica. Theoretical Considerations" outlines the most important theoretical considerations around the issue of Jamaican Creole. Based on a socio-historical and sociocultural analysis, Chapter I presents arguments in connection with the language situation of Jamaica, as perceived by the author both in analysing academic writings and in personal observations through the years. Observations are thus filtered through a theoretical discussion around Creole issues in general, and Jamaican Creole in particular. Based on the theoretical stance in DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987), the author argues the advantage of viewing the development of Jamaican Creole as a rhizomatic process; which would entail seeing Jamaican Creole as a legitimate language form, while also brushing aside linguistic theories such as that of decreolization which associates the development of Jamaican Creole with the loss of non-European features.

The proposed change in vision is explained in Chapter I, particularly through the use of the lenses metaphor to refer to the different analytical perspectives behind the discussion on matters concerning Creole languages in general, and Jamaican Creole in particular. The metaphorical use proposed implies that the lenses carried when analysing phenomena do transcend the physical capability of the human eye, to involve prior experience, background knowledge, and/or life history. The strength of the lenses metaphor lies on the fact that it

provides space for a multiplicity of analytical approaches, thus affording additional tools to better understand diverse perspectives and offering ground for different analytical angles, including those aimed at unveiling invention<sup>11</sup> strategies developed by traditional linguistics; particularly those concerning a framework within which Creole languages are seen as imperfect creations occurred under certain social circumstances. Hence, if applied to the analysis of Jamaican Creole development, different analytical lenses may offer ground to believe that, despite the specific social and colonial circumstances under which Jamaican Creole (as other Creole languages) appeared, the language should not be seen as an imperfect “creation”, but as a rhizome growing out of the “dialogic<sup>12</sup>” (BAKHTIN, 1981) colonial circumstances in the form of a new and legitimate mode of communication.

Chapter I sets the tone of the thesis as a cartography of language conceptions, perceptions and narratives among Creole-speaking Spanish teachers in Jamaica, putting forward a position of reflexivity and criticality; which leads to the understanding that this study is not a mere representation of what was “observed” at the field, but rather new knowledge resulting from a dialogic process between multiple *knowledges* and narratives encountered at the field, and involving those of the participants as much as those carried by the researcher herself.

Chapter II, entitled “Research Methodology. A Qualitative/Cartographic Exploration of Language Perceptions, Conceptions and Narratives among Jamaican Creole Speaking Teachers of Spanish”, describes the research methodology. This chapter discusses some theoretical aspects of the cartographic approach and the rhizomatic perspective followed during the research process; especially the notions of cartography and cartographic approach in connection with the research process, and the notion of rhizome, as applied to the development/evolution of Jamaican Creole. The chapter justifies the author’s methodological choice by illustrating the manner in which a cartographic approach and a rhizomatic perspective can yield another angle to understanding and contextualising the matter of

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<sup>11</sup> The term “invention” as proposed in MAKONI & PENNICOOK (2007). See discussion in Chapter I.

<sup>12</sup> The term “dialogic” is used throughout the thesis in the Bakhtinian sense of an encounter of ideas and points of view, all of which are considered valuable, albeit different, because each represents a “symbol of a certain orientation to life, an ideological position, [...] a specific real-life solution to [the] same ideological questions” (BAKHTIN, 1984, P. 239). That is to say, a notion that transcends the ordinary sense of the term “dialogue” to refer to an encounter involving conflicting positions marked by unequal and contested power relations.

Jamaican Creole, as a full-fledged language that happens to have an impact on foreign language teaching and learning, namely the Spanish language<sup>13</sup>.

The chapter also presents details of the cartographic instruments used to generate data. One aspect to bear in mind in connection with the choice of a cartographic approach is that the paradigm shift proposed in chapter I is followed by a change in research conception, methodology and terminology; i.e., the research process is seen as a “dialogic” (BAKHTIN (1984, 1994) and “reciprocally permeable” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 239) encounter in which language is seen as an all-encompassing context that includes the social, economic, political, cultural, historical and psychological aspects involved in language use; not as static, but as “ever-changing realities” (SCORSILINI-COMIN, 2014, p. 247), where the *subjectivities* of both the participants and the researcher meet and receive similar consideration; both contributing to findings that are interpreted as a *map* designing and sharing the *new knowledge process* that has been generated.

As opposed to the traditional idea of data *gathering*, the cartographic approach proposes that the research process is a moment for data *generation*; given that information reveals itself through a “dialogic process” Therefore, the research process does not entail merely listening and recording interview responses. The process develops through and active interaction and exchange that enhances mutual understanding between participants and the researcher<sup>14</sup>.

Interviews and Unstructured Conversations, therefore, were key in the process of data generation as instruments that allowed dialogic exchanges of “ideologically saturated language world views” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p. 74), thus facilitating knowledge creation and mutual acknowledgment of the “vagueness, polysemy, and metaphoric or connotative connections” akin to the processes of the mind ((BRUNER, 1990, p. 5) that took form through personal and shared narratives. Both instruments of data generation were also effective because they provided space for less restrictive (unplanned questions), and more relaxed and friendly moments of exchange; thus providing a suitable environment for unveiling subjectivities both, the explicitly expressed and the implicit unsaid (considering that silence is also relevant as it

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<sup>13</sup> The term ‘Spanish’ is used loosely here, being aware of the wide variation and scope of the so-called Spanish language. Further research is needed about this matter, considering the limited scope of the present research and the present impossibility to undertake another study of such anticipated length and wide scope within this thesis.

<sup>14</sup> Put in Bakhtin’s words, understanding “another person’s utterance means to orient oneself, with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. The greater their number and weight, the deeper and more substantial our understanding will be”. (BAKHTIN, 1994, p. 35).

may involve awareness about social, political and cultural trends and contexts (GIL, 2002, p. 255) that may also provide valuable information.

Chapter III is called *Narratives around Jamaican Creole. Data Discussion on Language Conceptions and Perceptions*. This chapter constitutes the core of this research, as it presents the analysis of the data generated at the research field; leading towards the overarching goal that has guided this research. The discussion about language conceptions and perceptions allowed creating a perceptual map that has served to portray the knowledge produced during the process, as a result of the exchanges triggered by the interviews and unstructured conversations between the participants and the researcher. Direct observations at the field also contributed to enhancing the researcher's perceptual map of the personal and shared narratives underlying participants' attitudes, beliefs and positions in regards to Jamaican Creole. Nonetheless, it may be valid to point out that, in line with the cartographic approach, such map should be seen as a "flexible [and momentary] concentration of meaning" (PASSOS, et al, 2010, p.10) constructed during the process.

## 2. CHAPTER I: THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN JAMAICA: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

*Until lions tell their stories,  
tales of hunting will glorify the hunter  
(African Proverb)*

### 2.1. Introductory Remarks

In this chapter, the author presents a discussion on some issues around Jamaican Creole, with the purpose of preparing the ground for the discussion on the data generated during the interviews and unstructured conversations. This chapter outlines the author's positions in regard to some notions around Creoles. The overall goal of this chapter, hence, is to discuss some theories related to the study of Creole languages in general, and Jamaican Creole in particular; in an attempt to swerve the angle of analyses by way of applying a rhizomatic perspective to the study of the matter in question. The proposal in this regard, is that Jamaican Creole may be seen as rhizome resulting from the particular evolutionary and transformational sociolinguistic process of Jamaica - a language product that is indefinitely growing and transforming according to the circumstances surrounding its speakers. In this chapter, the author also problematizes the use and implications of the term "Creole" and its derivational forms, considering them as inventions mostly influenced by Western views on languages and cultures.

Such rhizomatic perspective lies at the core of the cartographic approach followed in this qualitative research; aimed at knowing and understanding the prevailing language conceptions, perceptions and narratives of participating Jamaican Creole-speaking Spanish teachers. The author positions herself by rejecting notions such as *decreolization*, considering that such term is untenable on account of its limited approach to language and language development. The author also proposes the need to look at the matter of Creole languages in general, and Jamaican Creole in particular, through different lenses; in order to bring forth a fresh vision that moves away from the traditionally accepted truisms imposed by Western views.

### 2.2. Jamaican Creole. A Rhizomatic analysis.

Kumaravadivelu (2006, p. 3) clearly states the close relation languages have to our lives, and how we can easily forget their crucial role. For him,

Language permeates every aspect of human experience, and creates as well as reflects images of that experience. It is almost impossible to imagine human life without it. And yet, we seldom think about it. We are oblivious of its ubiquitous presence in and around us, just as the fish is (or, is it?) unmindful of the water it is submerged in. Even those who systematically study language have not fully figured out what it is."



Such assertion seems adequate for Jamaica, as well, due to the fact that, for most Jamaicans, what matters is to share ideas among themselves. Unlike linguists and others involved in the study of languages, language users carry on their lives without being concerned about definitions, concepts or theories about the language they are using, nor about what linguists may deem as obvious word combinations, language structures, or perceived genealogical language relations. That is to say, the “system of language is the product of deliberation on language [...] by no means carried out by the consciousness of the native speaker himself and by no means carried out for the immediate purpose of speaking” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p. 32). Hence, for Jamaican Creole users, just like any other language user, theoretic or linguistic criteria are irrelevant: The language is theirs because they make use of those structures and words that are useful for constructing and sharing their ideas, opinions, realities or dreams, oblivious to details such as language formative processes, structure or origin.

Conversely, linguists have studied the language situation in Jamaica. They have delved into the matter and showed that, parallel to Standard Jamaican English, there is another widely spoken language; which, like any other world language, has a rich and interesting history. BRATHWAITE (2005), in his study on the Jamaican society pointed out that:

Jamaican society has in common with all other societies, one assumes, a natural built-in drive or gravitational tendency towards cultural autonomy. Cultural autonomy demands a norm and a residential correspondence between the ‘great’ and ‘little’ traditions within the society (OP. CIT. p. 309).

The mere fact of having lived a historical process different from other societies does not indicate that Jamaica is different or peculiar. Characterized by a history of social mixtures, the social way of life in the island would be the one to consider, first and foremost, when referring to how Jamaican Creole has grown and consolidated; achieving the remarkable level of autonomy observed nowadays and, in fact, with all its ‘great and little’ social traditions. It would be pointless to deny that Jamaican Creole is **the** popular language in the island, but it is also attractive to many who are not natives of Jamaica; not only because it is a language already established in the island, but also because of its undeniable role in cultural transmission, as well as its presence in cultural, culinary and social movements; which transcend the natural borders of the island. Such are the cases of Reggae music, jerk-style food, and the Rastafarian movement, which gather thousands of followers all over the world. In this regard, the Jamaican

scholar, Frederick Cassidy, in his seminal work Jamaica Talk, presents an in-depth analysis on the main features of Jamaican Creole:

WHAT LANGUAGE do Jamaicans talk? The question is asked not only by strangers to the Caribbean but also by English and American visitors who have heard Jamaicans speaking what they did not at first recognize as a type of their own tongue . It is a question raised as well by students of language, and they mean, how is Jamaica Talk to be classified —as a type of English, or as something quite different, though obviously related? A real question, this, which deserves a sound answer — one, however, that cannot be given until we have carefully examined the language as Jamaicans use it (CASSIDY, 2007, p.1).

That vivid description of Jamaican Creole may be confirmed after observing daily life *runnings*<sup>15</sup> in Jamaica, as well as in the significant presence of many Creole-speaking Jamaicans in important fields, such as international sports, and culture; hence elevating the social visibility of the language as a natural means of communication amongst Jamaicans. Nonetheless, it seems fitting to point out that, just like in any other social grouping, it is possible to observe passionate manifestations of rejection and prejudice towards the different languages amongst some Jamaicans; targeting especially less privileged social groups, labourers and blacks; despite studies such as CASSIDY (1961), LALLA & D’COSTA (1990), MÜHLEISEN (2002), PATRICK (2003), POLLARD (2003), DURELAM (2008), which have demonstrated the strength and scope achieved by the language, which is, indeed, widely spoken in practically all aspects of the daily life in the island. One possible perspective when considering the interest observed in respect to Jamaican Creole may be related to its specific acoustic and aesthetic imprints, as described in CASSIDY (2007):

Another and equally interesting question is, How did Jamaicans come to talk as they do? The musical lilt and staccato rhythms, the mingling of strange words, the vowel sounds that go sliding off into diphthongs, the cheerful defiance of many niceties of traditional English grammar, the salty idioms, the wonderfully compressed proverbs, the pungent imagery of nicknames and epithets in the bestowal of which these islanders appear to be peculiarly adept — where do all these hail from, and how did they come to be? (OP. CIT. p. 1).

CASSIDY’s description is especially interesting because it was presented around 1961, a time when Jamaican Creole was neither accepted nor acceptable in the Jamaican society. Some linguists may claim that this description seems more poetic than linguistic, which could be acceptable, unless due consideration is given to Cassidy’s merit for presenting a detailed description of *Jamaican* (as Cassidy termed it), a language in its own right; and not a corruption

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<sup>15</sup> Jamaican word to refer to daily life and every-day happenings.

of Standard English or simply a vulgar dialect to be used exclusively at home, within the family circle or at informal settings with friends. The book transpires a high regard for Jamaican as the language of the people.

Quite a different reality is observed nowadays, when the language is widely spoken practically everywhere; including at hitherto unthinkable contexts like universities, the Parliament and judicial courts, there also being instances of significant advocacy in favour of the Jamaicans' language rights, culminating with the Charter on Language Policy and Language Rights in the Creole-Speaking Caribbean, signed in 2011 in Kingston, Jamaica. In the Preamble of the Charter, the Signatory Parties stated the importance of recognising that:

[A] majority of persons in Creole-speaking Caribbean states speak a Creole language as their first language and that many Caribbean Creole languages, though widely spoken, are not widely accepted as appropriate media of communication in public administration and in education. (CHARTER, 2011, p.3).

The purpose of the Charter was to promote the matter of language rights, particularly against the observed language discrimination that still prevails in the Caribbean. Such matter had already been discussed in the Jamaican Parliament, motivated by a presentation of Professor Hubert Devonish, from the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy of the University of the West Indies (Mona, Kingston).

Professor Devonish had submitted the document "Language Rights in the Draft Charter of Rights in the Jamaican Constitution: A Proposal", for consideration of a Parliamentary Committee on May 21, 2001. The Draft Minutes of the meeting held by the Select Committee of the Joint Houses showed that, on May 29, 2001, they had revised Professor Devonish's Proposal, and stated the following:

(ii) that, as a preparatory measure, to pave the way toward the eventual inclusion in the Constitution of a guarantee of the protection against discrimination on the ground of language, an agency modelled on the Antillean Linguistic Institute of the Netherland Antilles be established to standardize, popularize and formalize the already existing standard system for writing patois, to assist the Public Defender in establishing standards to be met by public agencies in terms of their ability to communicate in both Jamaican and standard English and to deal also with sign language.....(iii) that the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy of the University of the West Indies be encouraged to pursue its work on standardization, popularization and formalization of the Jamaican patois and to report appropriately on that work as it progresses. (OP. CIT, p. 6).



The Proposal tabled for consideration of the Jamaican Parliament, with the purpose of resolving the issue of language rights in Jamaica, is not a sudden or fortuitous act: It is a natural result of years of evolution and consolidation of the social uses of Jamaican Creole. The Proposal intended to bring forth the need of understanding the language historical roots, taking into account that the phenomenon being experienced at present is, in fact, the result of the social and historical development of Jamaica.

It would be fitting in this regard, however, to refer to the perspective proposed in MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007) in regards to the matter of ‘language rights’. According to these authors,

While it is useful to understand languages as inventions, it is also crucial to recognize that the effects of language inventions are very real. As we suggested above, this is where we generally part company with those fighting for language rights and multilingualism, since the struggle is all too often conducted on a terrain on which the existence of languages as real entities is left unquestioned. While we may support some aspects of these struggles as political movements, we would argue that the battle also has to be an epistemological one, and that unless this issue is adequately addressed, the very real effects of language inventions will continue to be felt by different communities. (Op. Cit. p. 21).

Such caveat brings to mind some issues that deserve consideration in order to understand the undercurrents fuelling the well-known social debates around Jamaican Creole. It calls for the need to propose regulatory changes, not based on traditionally accepted language policy positions, but rather by promoting a deep epistemological shift that would view the language situation of Jamaica as a rich context where social language practices are, indeed, “real and situated linguistic forms deployed as part of the communicative resources by speakers to serve their social and political goals” (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p.22). After all, the “very notion of ‘a language’ is an idealisation, a shorthand term for the use of a group of people” (MCMAHON, 1994, p. 8).

A different epistemological approach, as proposed in MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007), may help reduce the level of tension that the language debate always provokes amongst Jamaicans; since it may give way to new perspectives in regards to their language situation as a ground of translingual<sup>16</sup> rather than conflicting practices. Nonetheless, the move to legitimize the use of Jamaican Creole by way of a Parliamentary regulatory framework is understandable as a temporary solution. As Jamaicans so adequately say, ‘time is longer than a rope’, and the Proposal seems more like an attempt to grab the rope in order to secure a space and possibilities

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<sup>16</sup> The notion of translingual communication in this context refers to the speakers’ ability to mingle language elements, leaving aside language specificities in terms of form, and concentrating on discursive acts of expression.

for Jamaican Creole to be acknowledged as a defining factor in Jamaica, assuming that time shall take care of “more diverse ways of thinking about overlapping, translingual language uses” (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p.28).

The epistemological shift needed may be one that leads to see the development of Jamaican Creole (or any other language, for that matter), not as a homogeneous or static context, but one that is filled with social and psychological contradictions. Such shift entails understanding how a language relates with the social and historical aspects that characterize its use in society. Therefore, a deeper knowledge of the language context of Jamaica involves considering that “just as physical environments vary, so too do social environments. The ways in which human beings interact create social-ecological constellations that affect how participants behave toward each other in those environments” (PATTON, 2002, p.283).

The allusion to “social-ecological constellations” in PATTON (2002) above brings forth the pertinence of following a rhizomatic approach to the study of Jamaican Creole. Such approach may offer a more solid basis for the previously referred epistemological shift; since it may allow to see the language as a rhizome, constantly and multi-directionally developing. The rhizomatic approach may facilitate a better understanding as to where Jamaican Creole comes from, where it is placed at the moment, and in which directions it may evolve in the future. Likewise, a rhizomatic approach may offer better arguments to those involved in disciplines such as linguistics, history, education, sociology, or any other discipline seeking to achieve a better understanding of the Jamaican Creole phenomenon by allowing a perspective that may lead them to see language development or language variation as constant and endless rhizomatic creations.

Therefore, looking at Jamaican Creole as a rhizomatic creation indicates that Jamaican Creole is part of a societal development process. If seen as a process of constant growth, change, transformation, then Jamaican Creole is far from being a final language product: there is no such thing in the rhizomatic approach to language, which sees the role of language users as participants in a dynamic, ever-transforming process, characterized by the constant growth of new rhizomes.

As a rhizome, language has dimensions of development. There is no hierarchy or genealogy. Each language rhizome is a unique and genuine manifestation. Based on the foregoing, it may be suitable to argue that the notion of language as a rhizome points against traditionally accepted linguistic views, since from such perspective,

There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community. Language is, in Weinreich's words, "an essentially heterogeneous reality". There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity. Language stabilizes around a parish, a bishopric, a capital. It forms a bulb. It evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987, p. 10).

Such description of language development fits into the notion of language presented through this thesis, and justifies the epistemological path chosen to analyse the development of Jamaican Creole.

A rhizomatic perspective may be detected in the study of Jamaican Creole presented in CASSIDY (2007). The referred study, which was conducted in the 1950's, presents a descriptive account on the development of Jamaican Creole, portraying the language as a dynamic and creative living organism:

It is now three hundred years since the English language, which has found its way to every corner of the earth, took root in Jamaica. There it has flourished and developed its own local forms and flavour, as transplanted languages do everywhere. For language — let us never forget — is infinitely multiform, highly variable, ever on the change so long as it is alive. (CASSIDY, 2007. p. 1).

Cassidy's recount may be interpreted as based on a rhizomatic perspective showing how Jamaican Creole emerged from language systems that were transplanted into the island; which then have grown roots as their speakers settled in the new environment provided by the new context; thus becoming new rhizomes with their own characteristic multiplicity, variability, and ever-changing nature. A point of notice in Cassidy's recount of the striking variation observed in Jamaican Creole, is an almost poetic description that, without a doubt, touches the readers' senses, inciting their imagination:

Considering the history of the British Isles, this [linguistic variation] is in no way surprising. Nor should one be disturbed to find yet other variations where people of many kinds in a new colony have pooled their home differences, seasoned them with the tropical spices of Arawak and Carib Indians, Africans, Spaniards, Frenchmen, and assorted others, until a strong and tasty pepperpot of language is concocted. This, of course, is what has happened in Jamaica. (CASSIDY, 2007, p.2).

The language conception presented in CASSIDY (2007), which portrays Jamaican Creole as a vibrant, "flavourful" and thoroughly contextualized language product, has resonated in other studies, which also present a socio-historical approach to explain language evolution out of several sources that interacted during and after the colonial period, and which

established the basis for the speakers' socio-historical background through the creative process known as creolization, or as stated in BOLLAND (2005):

The concept of creolization provided a way to understand this was a false choice by showing that both continuity and creativity are involved when subordinated people contest culture with the dominant group. The combination of continuity and creativity that characterizes the development of Afro-Creole culture, however, is characteristic of the development of Caribbean culture in general, and this must be conceived in such a way as to include the contributions of all people in the Caribbean. (BOLLAND, 2005, p. 9).

In this regard, BRATHWAITE (2005), based on a historical approach, discusses the importance of the creolization process in the socio-historical and cultural development of Jamaica; a process characterized by the contribution of different cultural groups which coincided in the same space, albeit with different functions. For Brathwaite (2005, p. 307),

Even more important for understanding of Jamaican development during this period was the process of creolization, which is a way of seeing the society, not in terms of white and black, master and slave, in separate nuclear units, but as contributory parts of a whole.

In this regard, it would be fitting to stress the importance of considering the development of a culture, obviously including the language ascribed to such culture as well, as a process that involves multiple inputs; which may derive from different sources but that have similarly contributed to the creation of new phenomena. Furthermore, it would also be valid to view such "contributory parts" as multiple inputs amongst themselves, not just as "a spread of coexisting parallel direct transplants [but] as new combinations of once disparate meanings [that] took on degrees of stability and standardisation, charting a distinctive genealogy newly indigenous to the place" (GORDON, 2014, p. 67).

That is to say, if approached from a rhizomatic perspective, the creolization process would be understood as a confluence of and amongst groups, occurring within a space, each contributing to transform such space and being transformed in the process; or according to BRATHWAITE (2005, p.310), facilitating a historical notion that could be seen as a "sociocultural continuum":

The single most important factor in the development of Jamaican society was not the imported influence of the Mother Country or the local administrative activity of the white elite, but a cultural action—material, psychological and spiritual ---based upon the stimulus/response of individuals within the society to their environment and – as white/black, culturally discrete groups – to each other. The scope and quality of this response and interaction were dictated by the circumstances of the society's



foundation and composition—a ‘new’ construct, made up of newcomers to the landscape and cultural strangers each to the other; one group dominant, the other legally and subordinately slaves. (BRATHWAITE, 2005, p. 296).

It could be argued that the quoted assertion does not conform to the anti-dichotomy perspective of the rhizomatic approach, since it refers to two socially opposed groups – blacks and whites, masters and slaves, a criticism that would seem fair, if taking into account the proposal in DELEUZE e GUATTARI (1987), which establishes that nature does not operate through dichotomies, but by growing roots that have, in turn, sprung from other multiplied systems, which are themselves offspring of previously multiplied systems, and so on. The suitability of viewing creolization in the Caribbean as a rhizomatic process may be found in BOLLAND (2005):

If, for the participants in these religions, the relations between European and African beliefs and practices are varied, flexible, and organic, then we must move beyond such limiting hegemonic paradigms as dualism in order to understand the nature of creolization. Instead of trying to grasp the creolization process in terms of fixed binary oppositions we should understand it as an open-ended process shaped by a dialogue of power and resistance in which shifting similarities and differences, assimilations and syncretisms, are continually renegotiated. (BOLLAND, 2005, p.6).

The notion discussed in BOLLAND (2005) seems appropriate because it delves on the idea that dualism may limit the understanding of certain phenomena. There is an awareness concerning the inputs that clashed in the Caribbean context as a result of colonization, also considering each of the *participatory groups* as much as each individual involved, in order to better understand the multiple and rich mixture that emerged in that space and that, ultimately, shaped the process of creolization. Nonetheless, it would be fitting to point out that, looking at the notion of opposition as a driving force for new constructions, may also help understand the prevailing effects of the particular dynamics that marked the Caribbean process of creolization. In other words:

Creolisation, after all, offers a model of how it is that people have constructed collective worlds out of necessity. It is not through tiny unassociated parts coexisting in mutual hostility but by recognising, exploring, and enunciating complex interdependencies in ways that transcode and incorporate so that each is understood in and through the terms of the other mirroring the processes through which conditions of mutual intelligibility and sociality emerge. (GORDON, 2014, p.67).

The issue here is not looking at the Caribbean in general, or Jamaica in particular, as a polarized space of white and blacks, or Creole users and Standard Jamaican English users; but there is no point in denying that there is a significant discourse around the issue of language

that places Creole users in a position of understanding themselves as a group, and such understanding partly derives from their “mirroring” the social stances of others.

Rather than a plain opposition of contending groups, both BRATHWAITE (2005) and GORDON (2014) point towards a type of dialectical dualism which, without reaching the anti-dichotomy approach of the rhizomatic perspective, still considers creolization as a process that involves diverse angles, which played a role in the development of creolization. Both authors point out the significant prevalence of the African and the British, mostly blacks and whites, as contending cultural elements of “complex interdependencies”, which entailed “material, psychological and spiritual cultural action” (GORDON, 2014, p.68).

Conversely, it may be argued that the case of Jamaican Creole illustrates a type of rhizomatic evolution, in that the creolization process experienced in the island involved the participation of multiple cultural inputs (namely African, British, Arawak, Spaniard, East Indian and Chinese<sup>17</sup>), and the growth of a multiplicity of rhizomes. All those inputs contributed cultural elements that may be observed in Jamaica today; especially through the physical appearance of Jamaicans, their culinary traditions, architecture and, of course, the language<sup>18</sup>. BOLLAND (2005) criticises academic studies that rely on the dualistic approach arguing that such approach does not truly reflect the essence of the Caribbean creolization process that brought forth Caribbean language and culture:

The dualistic approach sometimes creeps back into the analysis of scholars who are thinking dialectically because dualism predominates in the European intellectual tradition. In Descartes’ philosophy, for example, the universe is composed of two irreducible and irreconcilable components, mind and matter. Such binary oppositions shape the hegemonic paradigms within which we think, but they may inhibit or distort our understanding of the cultural process of creolization. Instead of analyzing cultural contact and interaction in terms of static and irreconcilable opposites in the manner of dualism, dialectical analysis draws attention to changes in the nature of the opposing principles and forces that result from such interaction, so the cultural process is seen as open ended and multi-directional, rather than finite and linear. (OP. CIT, p. 3).

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<sup>17</sup> Those are the groups mostly recognised in the history of Jamaica, but it would be difficult to put a limit in terms of social groups participating in this process, especially given the dynamic character of colonial life in the Caribbean, as it is known that, apart from the colonizers, the slaves, the aboriginal folks, there were groups of traders and labourers who travelled from island to island to carry out their regular activities. According to PRADO, (2013, p. 3) “Between 1500 and 1750, Europeans, Africans and Amerindians built an Atlantic community structured around commerce”.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, place names like *Lacovia*, *Bonito*, *Pangola*, river names like Minho, Cobre, Blanco, and city names like *Santa Cruz*, *Savanna-la-Mar* are remnants of the Spanish presence in Jamaica. Jamaican culinary traditions show the impact of Chinese, Arawak and East India.

It is in this regard that, studies on Creole languages, in general, and Jamaican Creole, in particular, such as BRATHWAITE (2005), CASSIDY (2007)<sup>19</sup>, MUFUWENE (1996, 1998, 2001), DEGRAFF (2003), DEVONISH (1986) and PATRICK (2003), among others, present the linguistic landscape of languages which, by “appearing where they were not supposed to [...] exemplified and therefore pointed to key features of how human worlds are often forged” (GORDON, 2014). Creole studies, therefore, make a point in showing the evolution of languages within a vibrant and dynamic space, where speakers build their languages within their specific historical, social, cultural and economic circumstances.

It is interesting to note that, in those studies, the authors’ stances in respect to Creole languages (Jamaican included) present them as languages that have sprung out of the particular historical development of the region and the islands, and that, in spite of their relatively recent birth, their evolutionary processes do not differ from the processes followed by all other universal languages. It may be stances like those previously mentioned that prompted MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007, p.21) to affirm that “all languages are creoles rather than all creoles are languages.

A perspective along the line of MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007) had been discussed in MUFUWENE (1996, 1998) and DEGRAFF (2003), where the authors affirm that the origin and development of Creole languages, including Jamaican Creole, are far from being exceptional or different processes. Creole languages may be seen as entities that, despite having sprung from particular sociocultural inputs and showing particular sociocultural resulting products, have followed evolutionary processes similar to any other language. Thus, the authors argue that it is important to disregard the notion implying that Creole languages are exceptional, given that their origin does not differ from that of other languages and that, ultimately, all languages are products of social contact. This proposal may be illustrated by observing Caribbean islands, especially those with such rich linguistic situation that it is commonplace to see up to four languages being regularly spoken in the daily interaction among inhabitants and with visitors.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cassidy’s *Jamaica Talk* was originally published in 1962.

<sup>20</sup> As observed by the author, there are cases like San Andrés (Colombia) and St. Martin, where it is commonplace to see a regular use of several languages. People in San Andres switch naturally from Spanish to (Jamaican) Creole, while in Saint Martin, alongside Dutch and French (both official languages in the island), English and Spanish are regularly observed. Likewise, Curacao, where Dutch and Papiamentu function as official languages (Act no. 38, June 2003. [http://www.papiamentu.aw/main/images/pdf/2003\\_lv\\_papiamentu.pdf](http://www.papiamentu.aw/main/images/pdf/2003_lv_papiamentu.pdf)), people regularly use Spanish and English. It is interesting, almost amazing, to see the smooth transition from one language to another in daily interactions.

Jamaica also shows an interesting linguistic panorama. Despite the apparently obvious fact that there are only two functioning languages (Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole), there are also small linguistic pockets formed by immigrants who maintain their languages (Chinese, Haitian Creole and Spanish). The rich and diverse linguistic situation of Jamaica would offer material for an interesting linguistic research, however such study may prove too extensive to be undertaken under the scope of the present research, which is mainly concentrated on the situation of Jamaican Creole in its relation to the teaching of Spanish.

### 2.3. The historical notion of Jamaican Creole.

Many linguists agree on the importance of studying Creole languages as a valid way to furthering the knowledge about the speakers' histories and cultures. One long-time prevailing conception has been the consideration of Creole languages as corruptions<sup>21</sup> of the languages spoken by colonizers, mostly termed as "lexifiers"<sup>22</sup>, in the Caribbean as well as in other regions where some sort of colonization has occurred. Such conception has been used to identify Creole languages and, by extension, to categorize their speakers. DEGRAFF (2005) firmly criticizes studies that, despite having been conducted at different times, still imply an assumed inferiority of the "languages and their speakers" (OP. CIT, p. 537):

Both Julien Vinson and Nicolas Quint illustrate the long-held and popular view that associates "creolization" with some extremely impoverishing form of simplification whose maximally degraded and primitive output, namely a "Creole" language, is to be evaluated with the European target language as sole yardstick. Both authors explicitly consider Creoles to be vastly inferior to the corresponding European "civilized" languages. What they perceive as Creoles' drastic inferiority they attribute to some "special nature" that is intrinsic to the very process of creolization and or to the latter's agents. (DEGRAFF, 2005, p.538).

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<sup>21</sup> See CHAUDENSON (2002) for a deeper discussion on this matter.

<sup>22</sup> The term *lexifiers* is more traditional than accurate, since it is a known fact that there was a great variety of linguistic forms used among the European groups that came to the Caribbean. In this regard, MUFUWENE (2002), stated that: "There is a genetic relationship between these two, because the lexifiers of creoles, those varieties from which they have inherited most of their vocabularies, have often been correctly identified as colonial koinés. These are compromise varieties from among diverse dialects of the same language. Instead of selecting one single dialect as their lingua franca, speakers of the European lexifiers wound up developing a new colonial dialect which included their common features but only some of those that distinguished them from one another. Such selections did not necessarily originate from the same dialect, nor were they the same from one colony to another—a fact that accounts in part for regional variation" (MUFUWENE, 2002, p. 4). In the case of Jamaica, there are historical data showing that the group identified as the 'English' came from different regions and/or countries in the United Kingdom: "The home country was an irresistible magnet, with chances for investment, gentrification and aristocratic status. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century, and beyond, there were few people of "British" (English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish) origin who did not share the ambition to "return" to Britain and live British lives enabled by income drawn from their Jamaican properties" ... "The dominance of the Scots was often remarked upon by contemporaries. Lady Nugent, soon after her arrival in Jamaica in 1801, bravely declared that "almost all the agents, attornies, merchants and shopkeepers, are of that country [Scotland], and really do deserve to thrive in this, they are so industrious. (HIGMAN, 2005).

The views which, according to DEGRAFF (2005), are presented in Vinson (1889)<sup>23</sup> and Quint (1997)<sup>24</sup> may be easily observed in Jamaica nowadays. As observed during the personal interview process and other informal discussions during this research, despite the increased knowledge about Jamaican Creole, as well as the increasing level of acceptance in the Jamaican society, it is commonplace to hear many speakers state that “Patwa is not a language”, “it is a language for family and friends”, “it is useful when you want to use foul language”, etc.

DEGRAFF (2005) understands the “special nature” discussed in Vinson (1889)<sup>25</sup> and Quint (1997) as an indication of a Creole exceptionalism, a notion harshly opposed in MUFWENE (2001) and DEGRAFF (2003, 2005). MUFWENE (2001) questions the alleged exceptional character of Creoles by stating that:

Are the restructuring processes that produced Creole vernaculars different in kind or in speed from those that produced other new varieties of European languages during the same period in the colonies or even earlier in Europe? Is it plausible to assume that vernaculars such as Jamaican Patwa and Louisiana Creole developed faster than Jamaican English and Louisiana French varieties? Or is it more accurate to assume that they developed concurrently and that evolutionary speed has nothing to do with whether or not a new variety should, or should not, be called a creole? Is there any justification for the position that “classic creoles” developed abruptly, over one generation (Bickerton 1981, 1984, 1999), while languages such as French took centuries to evolve into what they are like today? (OP. CIT., p. 13).

MUFWENE (2001) responds to his own questions by presenting arguments against what he understands as a manifestation of colonial mentality, affirming that there is nothing exceptional about the evolution of Creole languages. DEGRAFF (2005) is even more direct in rejecting exceptionalism by stating that:

This exceptionalist baggage, a legacy of the race theoretical assumptions that were promoted as part and parcel of Europe’s mission civilisatrice in Africa and the Americas, has been forcefully dragged across time and space, and it is still central to much work in contemporary creolistics, independent of theoretical orientation. (DEGRAFF, 2005, p. 537).

Both MUFWENE (1996, 1998, 2001, 2006, 2002) and DEGRAFF (2003, 2005) affirm that there is nothing exceptional about Creole languages, since they have experienced evolutionary processes similar to those of any other language. According to MUFWENE (2001:13), such evolutionary processes question the plausibility of a different restructuration

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<sup>23</sup> Julien (1889). Créoles. In Adolphe Bertillon et al. (eds.), *Dictionnaire des sciences anthropologiques*.

<sup>24</sup> Quint, Nicolas (1997). *Les îles du Cap-Vert aujourd’hui: Perdues dans l’immensité*.

<sup>25</sup> Julien (1889). Créoles. In Adolphe Bertillon et al. (eds.), *Dictionnaire des sciences anthropologiques*.

process of Creole languages; thus pointing out inaccuracies when comparing the historical evolution of Creoles with that of European languages, particularly those derived from Latin. MUFUWENE (2001) concludes that all those languages have followed similar evolutionary processes and therefore Creoles should not be seen as “outcomes of abnormal, unusual, or unnatural developments in language evolution. Rather, they make more evident restructuring processes that must have taken place in the evolutions of other languages” (MUFUWENE, 2001, p. 192). Such line of thought prompted the previously quoted statement in MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007, p. 21) stating that “all languages are creoles” and not the other way around.

It would be hard to disagree with the assertions above. There is indeed an evolutionary process akin to languages, because they are all products of social contact. Just as any language, Creoles are the resulting rhizomes of the historical moments lived by their speakers; i.e., it may be fitting to look at language development as a rhizomatic process, with multiple *inputs* (all the language varieties spoken at the time and place) and multiple growing *roots and bulbs* (the resulting language varieties observed today). Likewise, as a result of said rhizomatic process and given their infinite character, the resulting rhizomes, seen as the current Creole languages continue to evolve and opening up new linguistic rhizomes. The process never moves in reverse, just like it is impossible to revert the growth of roots, radicles, and new bulbs, thus dismantling the so-called *decreolization process*. From this perspective, no language *loses* properties to *return* to its original form; but it always grows into new varieties.

In this regard, it may be suitable to consider the warning presented in PENNYCOOK (1998) in connection with discursive tropes that nourish colonial ideology, and that relate to the notion of Creole exceptionalism:

Surveillance (the privileged vantage point), appropriation (rendering others' land and ideas as European), aestheticization (treating the Third World as material for sentimental human interest or melodramatic entertainment), classification (grouping colonized people into different categories, especially racial hierarchies), debasement (the constant description of the colonized as corrupt, dirty and dishonest), negation (viewing the Other in terms of absence, as lacking in language, culture and intellect), affirmation (the constant stress on European superiority), idealization (the view of native peoples as innocent, noble savages), insubstantialization (the description of colonized countries only as a backdrop for European voyages of inward discovery), naturalization (considering colonized people as following natural rather than cultural laws) and eroticization (comparing the relationship between colonizer and colonized with that between men and women). (OP. CIT, p. 50).

Such colonial mentality baggage relates to traditional academic and popular views that have regarded Creole speaking people, in Jamaica and elsewhere, as "inferior" or “without

history”, some going as far as asserting that “history is built around achievement and creativity, and nothing has been created in the West Indies” (NAIPAUL, 1962:29)<sup>26</sup>. In opposition to such negative and racist perception of Creole speakers, ALLEYNE (1980) presents a study criticising the alleged absence of history in the Caribbean, and shows the relevance of historical events for the emergence and development of Creole languages and studies around them. The study presented in ALLEYNE (1980) may, in turn, be related to the historical developments at the time, characterised by the demands of popular movements favouring a dignified portrayal of black people.

Creole studies that followed were strengthened with contributions about the origin and development of Creole peoples and their languages, discussing related matters such as “creoles”, “pidgins”, “creolization” and “decreolization”, among others. The resulting academic tradition has contributed to shape the theoretical basis for understanding Creole languages and their users; while also transforming linguistic studies and opening new roads for divergent philosophical and intellectual contributions such as MUFWENE (1996, 1998, 2001, 2006 2002), DEGRAFF (2003, 2005), PENNYCOOK(1998), MAKONI & PENNYCOOK(2007), DEVONISH (1978), among others.

Regarding the historical notion of Creoles and by way of illustration, MUFUWENE (2002, p. 32) resorts to some socio-ethnographic factors, which need to be borne in mind when discussing the matter of language evolution. According to the author:

- a) Any communal language exists because speakers using systems that are not necessarily identical interact with one another. In the process they accommodate each other in their speech habits;
- b) In such historical scenarios marked by continuous population contacts [...] how an emergent vernacular is affected by new contacts depends in part on the makeup of the current system and in part on the new alternatives brought over by the new populations.
- c) Ethnographic factors such as the demographic proportion of the newcomers relative to the local populations, their attitudes toward each other, and their social status also bear on how the systems in contact emerge from the competition.

Therefore, it is the contact amongst users, at a certain historical moment, within a particular space, that creates new language forms, and such conditions have happened and continue to happen ad infinitum in human societies.

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<sup>26</sup> “Correspondingly, other Caribbean writers responded with some hostility. John Hearne, for instance, gave the book a cold snub: “Mr. Naipaul's personal tragedy is that he believes his panic to be unique, or rather that the society from which he fled in panic is uniquely and horribly worthless” (Ozawa, Shizen. On Naipaul's Cultural Positions in *The Middle Passage*. CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 14.5 (2012): <http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2148>. (Accessed August 25, 2015)

POLOMÉ (1983, p.133) also raised a relevant point when comparing the evolution of Latin-derived languages and Creoles. In his opinion, there is no point of comparison, given the different socio-political nature of the relationship between Rome and the conquered territories, as opposed to the plantation economy that prevailed in the Caribbean. Beyond the strictly political and economic approach presented in POLOMÉ (1983), it is suitable to consider that, bar the specificities of each historical moment, there is the undeniable matter of social contact, which has an essential bearing on language development. Thus, if seen as a product of social contact, first and foremost, Creole languages can stand any comparative test against the universally known Latin-derived European languages, or any other language for that matter. Furthermore, if seen as rhizomatic developments, as proposed in this thesis, such new forms are not to be regarded compositions based on processes of code-switching by individual users while creating their discursive expressions nor as hybrid forms resulting from social interactions. In this regard, DEGRAFF (2005) warns against the discursive subtleties around the issue of Creole languages:

The canonical tropes that recur in the discourse on Creole genesis effectively segregate Creole languages in “linguistic exile” (Corcoran’s 2001:Sec.4 phrase) either (i) as degenerate offshoots (i.e., radically simplified versions) of their European ancestors (a.k.a. superstrates and lexifiers); (ii) as languages that, because of : the structural degeneracy in (i), are subject to decreolization qua language death; (iii) as special hybrids with exceptional genealogy – languages with African-derived grammatical structures and European-sounding words; (iv) as the only contemporary languages with a history of abnormal transmission (i.e. languages whose genesis corresponds with a break in transmission), an abnormal break that results from pidginization, with Creoles emerging from the linguistic scratch of a structureless Pidgin; (v) as the contemporary languages that most closely resemble the earliest, the archetypal, human language in the history of human evolution. (DEGRAFF, 2005, p. 545).

The proposal in DEGRAFF (2005) implies the need of changing the Creole discourse and creating space for new ways of thinking that escape the traps of colonialist discourse. In that regard, one implicit aim of this thesis is to deviate from traditional colonial discursive practices by presenting a different approach to the study of Creole languages; particularly Jamaican Creole, with the conviction that there is a need to stay away from “academic complicity in providing a scientific rationale for racism and colonialism” (PENNYCOOK (1998:49).

With such view in mind, the current cartographic research aims at observing and discussing the narratives filtered through perceptions and conceptions amongst Creole-speaking participants, language teachers themselves, following a perspective leading to



problematize probable traces of colonial discourse lingering in Jamaica. The thesis also discusses how such language narratives are somehow incorporated in the teaching practices of Spanish.

#### **2.4. Creolization and Decreolization. Disinventing Terminologies.**

Traditionally, studies on Creole languages include the terms *creolization* and *decreolization*, terms derived from the term ‘Creole’, to present analyses on the historical evolution, the general features or the status of these languages. Without contesting the terminology based on derivations of the word ‘Creole’, SÁNCHEZ (2006) proposed the term *transcreolization* to problematize the use and implications of the term *decreolization*. It is a fact that, most times, the origin of some terms gets lost in the crevices of history, as they are incorporated in regular interaction; hence becoming commonplace and rarely questioned. Nonetheless, it may be suitable, for the purpose of the perspective followed in this thesis, to include some considerations with the aim of problematizing acceptably customary use and planting some suspicion in relation to terms such as ‘Creole’ and its derivational terms. According to Chaudenson (2002, p.1),

The current etymology of the word creole was proposed a long time ago. Recent lexicographic attempts to determine its origin more accurately have not been successful. Nonetheless, it is useful to start this study of Creoles by citing two alleged sources. They are obviously false, but, in their respective ways, they illustrate perfectly how often extreme ideological fantasies can divert serious thinking, even in debates that are reputedly scientific.

CHAUDENSON (2002) leaves no doubt about the fact that the classification of peoples and cultures most times arise from “ideological fantasies” (OP. CIT, p. 1); or rather, as rashly presented in MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007, p.21), a move showing the “epistemic violence visited on the speakers of those languages as they were called into existence”. DEGRAFF (2005) discusses the origin of the term ‘Creole’, tracing it back to the 17th Century, when it was usually associated with colonial life; mainly to describe things that were typical of the colonies:

Etymologically, the word “Creole” derives from Portuguese crioulo and or Spanish criollo, which mean ‘raised in the home’ (from criar ‘to raise, to breed’; cf. Latin creare ‘to create’). In the Caribbean colonial context, the use of “Creole” in respect to human beings and other biological species seems to have preceded its use in respect to speech varieties. (DEGRAFF, 2005, p.541).

In Spain, for instance, the term already had a classist/racist connotation, as it was used to mark socioeconomic and political differences:

Even though in terms of language, religion, ancestry, or manners he was largely indistinguishable from the Spain-born Spaniards. There was nothing to be done about it: he was *irremediably a creole*. Yet how irrational his exclusion must have seemed! Nonetheless, hidden inside the irrationality was this logic: born in the Americas, he could not be a true Spaniard; *ergo*, born in Spain, the *peninsular* could not be a true American. (ANDERSON, 2006, p.57).

Like Spain, other colonial empires in the Americas and the Caribbean also used the term, save for the formal accommodation to their language patterns. So, apart from the Spanish *criollo*, it was possible to hear *créole* in French, *crioulo* in Portuguese, derived from *cria*, and from Latin *creare*, and creole in English.

Since the sixteenth century the word *criollo* has meant ‘native’ to the Caribbean but of ‘Old World’ origins, used as a noun or adjective referring to cattle, language, food, people, and so on. Thus, ‘Creoles,’ who could be white, black or mixed, were simply those people who were born locally and ‘creole speech’ referred to the variants of Old World languages that were developed and used by people in the Caribbean, whether they were whites, blacks or mixed. (BOLLAND, 2005, p. 7).

Obviously, the term *Creole* was an invented word, used to mark or, perhaps, understand the phenomenon that was occurring in the colonies; but, just like any other invention, the term evokes “a history, a social process [which] denaturalizes cultural artefacts and practices, stripping them of primordial authenticity and essentialism” (ZELEZA, 2006).

The term *Creole* is generally accepted amongst language users as well as scholars and observers of those cultures and languages, and is regularly used to identify, explain or participate of the cultures to which it refers. Scholars, in turn, resort to the term as a way to theorize on the “organic and dialectical development of a Creole culture from diverse origins [as] illustrated by a wide variety of examples of music, language, religion, or other aspects of Caribbean culture” (BOLLAND, 2005, p. 4). Nowadays, it seems that such term continues to be used because, devoid of its original connotation to an extent<sup>27</sup>, it has been digested, together with many other things inherited from the past.

However, if seen from the perspective of MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007), which views the matter of languages as *inventions*, then it would be fair to extend such notion to the

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<sup>27</sup> It is important, nonetheless, to be aware of the caveat presented in BOLLAND (2005), concerning the nuances of “the concepts ‘creole’ and ‘creolization,’ which may be used analytically in the scholarly study of cultures and societies, but are also words that are used in those societies with an ideological function” (P. 2).

invention of the language and the term *Creole*. It would be fitting, then, to argue that it is important to understand that such invention, which originally worked as a form of entrapment of the peoples identified as Creoles into a category of inferiority, has become a mental prison that continues to hold them into a circle of inequity. Hence, it is pertinent to be aware that terms such as *Creole* and *creolization*, now used to identify the peoples, cultures and languages like those of Jamaica, may be loaded with a negative connotation when used as ethnic markers. Likewise, the term *decreolization* carries an ideological and classist nuance when referring to the “loss” (WHINNOM, 1968) of features in favour of another language, ergo, culture.

Nonetheless, it may be also fitting to consider if, at this time, it would be useful attempting to find/create/invent new terms to define the cultural (or other) phenomena in the Caribbean. However, let there be no doubt about the pertinence of being aware about the ideological nuances hidden within terms such as *Creole*, and use creativity to escape the ideological load they (implicitly or explicitly) convey. An instance of such creativity would be the dropping of the ‘surname’ *Creole* from language names and start identifying them with their speakers --Jamaican, Trinidadian, and Dominican<sup>28</sup>. In such regard, it may be suitable to recall BOLLAND (2005):

M.G. Smith, in the essay “West Indian Culture,” distinguished between the analytic and ideological functions of the concept culture (1-2). While scholars may use a concept analytically, the same concept is used in the culture which they study in an ideological way. What Smith said of the concept culture is true also for the concepts ‘creole’ and ‘creolization,’ which may be used analytically in the scholarly study of cultures and societies, but are also words that are used in those societies with an ideological function. We need to be aware of the problem that arises when these distinct uses of the concepts overlap. (OP. CIT, p. 2).

Chances are, however, that the analytical and ideological approaches be combined, because analyses are always filtered through the system of ideas and beliefs (ideology) of the analyser; both being part of the subconscious of an individual. Any phenomenon will be seen *through the eyes* or lenses of s/he who is looking, which indicates that concepts such as *Creole* and *creolization* will reflect the social, cultural, economic, and also, linguistic perspective of the observer. Hence, the interpretation of analyses about Caribbean societies may be inadequate if the ideological component, both of the analyser and the observer were disregarded. Furthermore, it would also be necessary to consider the nuances of the *Creole* invention to

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<sup>28</sup> The word Jamaican has been used before. However, despite having been already used in 1962 by CASSIDY, most scholars continue to use the expression *Jamaican Creole*.

achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question, especially generalized stances that see Caribbean societies as picturesque and exotic destinations; both for the natural landscape and the human component. So, even when the term *Creole* and its derivations are accepted and automatically included in Caribbean studies, it is only fair to remember the origin of those terms, and use them if we must, but armed against naivety. As foregrounded by BOLLAND (2005, p.52),

On the one hand, the concepts, as analytic concepts, help us to understand the relationships between cultural change and the structures and processes of social conflict in Caribbean history. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this creative process of adaptation, transformation, and synthesis had laid the groundwork of a Caribbean culture that was neither African nor European, though it had developed out of the interaction between African, European and Amerindian peoples. [...] The use of these concepts, which emphasize African traditions and the active roles of people in creating culture and asserting their identity in an oppressive context, contrasts with the imperial view of the colonies as incomplete, impure, and inferior versions of their ‘mother country,’ and is historically linked to the process of decolonization and nation-building.

It is precisely that perception of *incompleteness*, *impurity* and *imperfection* behind the creation of the name *Creole* which lies at the heart of the ideological dilemma; particularly for scholars who have committed to studying the so-called Creole societies and languages. Such scholars, including the author of this thesis herself, would need to cut their way through and try to get to the gist of the matter; namely the understanding that Caribbean societies and languages are not *crianças*<sup>29</sup> of the colonial masters, but products of rhizomatic developments caused by the specific socio-historical circumstances occurring in the region. That is to say, Caribbean Creole civilization should be considered “in all its diversity, with its various peoples constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew in an incredible explosion of cultures” (BOLLAND, 2005, p. 12), considering as well that “Creole languages have been, and continue to be, dynamic systems with changes internally generated at all structural levels” (FERREIRA e ALLEYNE, 2007 p. 327).

#### **2.4.1. Creolization**

From a perspective of constant exchange and constant development, it may be stated that creolization has been a sociolinguistic product of a contact situation; resulting in new societies with their new cultures that have grown out of the multiple contributions of multiple cultural and linguistic groupings. Such contributions have combined within a creative rhizomatic process leading to the formation of new language rhizomes. It would be pertinent,

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<sup>29</sup> Portuguese for ‘children’.

however, to avoid considering said contact situation as a neutral, peaceful or fraternal encounter. It may be wiser to look at the ensuing linguistic situation as a moment of active *polyglossia* (BAKHTIN, 1981), in that

The world becomes polyglot, once and for all and irreversibly. The period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end. Languages throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language. The naive and stubborn coexistence of "languages" within a given national language also comes to an end -that is, there is no more peaceful co-existence between territorial dialects, social and professional dialects and jargons. (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 12).

BAKHTIN (1981) leads to understanding creolization as a dialogic transformation process which materialized through the cultural contact (or clash) that characterized the birth of modern Caribbean societies. Thus, it is fitting to understand the nature of the dialogue as the socio-ideological and cultural exchange occurring at a “particular historical moment in a socially specific environment BAKHTIN, 1994, p. 76), that marked the social and historical role of contact in the evolution of Caribbean languages. Such perspective remains valid when looking at the current developments associated with the growing social use and acceptance of such languages, and may allow a more efficient explanation for the current linguistic situation in places like Jamaica.

Therefore, it is worth furthering the understanding of creolization as a dialogic process resulting from the complex array of multiplicities involved in the Caribbean rhizomatic development. But, it would also be important to bear in mind that such development process was not unique to the Caribbean. If understood as a dialogic process, it may be argued that creolization has occurred in any and all processes of social mixture; hence the importance of understanding such phenomenon as a multidimensional process that touches on all social and spatial aspects of the places involved. Such approach to the study of creolization may offer better tools for understanding the socio-cultural and ideological history of the Caribbean in general, and Jamaica in particular, as dialogic and rhizomatic processes through which all concerned cultural groups have contributed to create new cultural forms. In that regard, BOLLAND (2005), puts forward the need of considering the dialogic contributions of all parties involved:

The concept of creolization is important because it avoids both the view that enslaved Africans were stripped of their cultures and acculturated into a European culture, and also the view that evidence of the African heritage in the Caribbean lies only in ‘retentions’ or ‘survivals.’ Cultural change was not a one-way process in which colonized peoples passively absorbed the culture of the dominant Europeans, and the

study of African influences should not be limited to the search for African retentions as if they are items under glass cases in a museum. (Op. Cit., p.2).

In Jamaica, as well as in other countries and regions where the process has occurred, it may be fitting to consider creolization as a dynamic, transformational and creative drive; working in society through the input of lateral external inputs derived from multiple cultural groups which, chaotically and dynamically, intermixed with the vertical inputs derived from internal transformation processes experienced within each group. If seen under such light, creolization may be regarded as a highly dynamic rhizomatic process based on the fact that:

Creolisation does suggest an intensity of interaction, a much more than casual cohabitation of social and political worlds, opportunities for which are typically furnished by fresh bouts of voluntary or coerced migration. However, situations that render creolisation likely may also be due to changes that do not involve crossing dramatic geographical distances but that are also described in spatial terms. For example, the movement of cultural or religious outsiders up or down the class ladder may lead to individuals among them more consistently or intensely interacting with members of communities with whom their previous relations had been at best distant. Their sudden proximity then raises anew very old questions of what in the lives of others to incorporate, mimic, or reject. (GORDON, 2014, p. 69).

It is interesting to point out, as GORDON 2014 rightly puts it, that creolization needs to be approached from a wider perspective; due to the workings of lateral and vertical inputs. In other words, creolization encompasses all contributions from the concerned multiple cultural groups, those derived from external elements brought into the picture, as well as those internal transformations resulting from their cohabitation in the new environment. Hence, as a rhizome, creolization entails the creation of a “continuous as well as a radically new culture” (GORDON, 2014).

As an essential cultural aspect of the island, Jamaican Creole also illustrates the continuous and innovative character of creolization. Originating from the specific contact/dialogic situation of Jamaica and resulting from the need of interaction among the multiple social groups that coincided within that space and time, this language continues evolving. Hence, it is essential to understand the nature of Jamaican Creole as a synthetic linguistic product; not as a corruption or erosion of any other language (or languages), particularly Standard English (GORDON, 2014). Unfortunately, Jamaican Creole has been, and continues to be, identified with low status speakers, a belief probably related to the discussion presented in DEGRAFF (2005):

The socio-historical factors underlying the development of Creole languages out of extensive language contact include a continuum of power asymmetries. At the extreme end of this continuum, we find drastic psychological and social distance

separating the socio-politically dominant and dominated groups – speakers of the “superstrate” and “substrate” languages, respectively. In effect, Creole languages are the linguistic side effects of a peculiar type of border-crossing and “globalization,” as occasioned by the slave trade and other mercantilist practices of the British, French, Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish in Africa and the Americas. (DEGRAFF, 2005, p.542).

Therefore, when analysing the creolization process in Jamaica, as well as its “by-product” Jamaican Creole, it is important to present a balanced consideration of the cultural inputs motivating the Jamaican rhizome. It would not be appropriate to overemphasize the contribution of any one party, as BOLLAND (2005) warns in respect to the African contribution:

The concept creolization helps in the comparative analysis of the cultures of the African diaspora but, if Creole is used synonymously with Afro-Creole, then this limits who may be considered Creole. The concept of creolization, when used as a descriptive-empirical account of the specific socio-historical process involving people of African descent, marginalizes and excludes peoples and cultures of the Caribbean who are not part of the ‘Black Atlantic’ community. Consequently, although the concept helps us analyse cultural conflicts, innovations and developments within the African diaspora, it may hinder the analysis of the interrelations between this and other diasporas. (BOLLAND, 2005, p.11).

In other words, if understood as a rhizomatic process, there would be no need for a perspective along the line of the assertion presented in BOLLAND (2005), given that creolization would be seen as a process characterized by a multiplicity of contributions from all the cultural groups involved. Hence, any approach emphasizing the impact of a particular group would be less than adequate, given the complex and dynamic mixture and synthesis occurring in the Caribbean. Another plausible argument in this regard would be based on the fact that these groups were not uniform or homogeneous. Thus, it would be beneficial for this sort of analysis to consider the linguistic and ethnic diversity amongst the very groups involved in the process.

#### **2.4.2. Decreolization**

It may be pertinent to bear in mind that group participation in language development processes is, indeed, full of complexity. History attests to considerable socio-economic group differences that do play a part in language development, given their impact on issues such as officialdom and prestige (or lack thereof), as well as language input on determining social activities such as literacy, politics, judicial proceedings, among others. Such facts have been at work in the Jamaican society, where Standard Jamaican English seems to be “exerting a powerful influence” (Patrick, 2002, p.17) on the developments around Jamaica Creole,

particularly in relation to the shifts observed (and reported by Participants) concerning attempts of social mobility, for instance. Such changes in use may have played a role in the proposal of the term *decreolization* (WHINNON, 1968), in explaining the “loss” of Jamaican Creole features.

HOLM (2000) also used the term decreolization as a process involving the *loss* of non-European forms that originally helped to shape Creole languages on account of the extended contact with what he refers to as “lexical donors”. The author refers specifically to the case of Jamaica where the *official* language, Standard Jamaican English, seems to him to be having the upper hand in its position in regards to Jamaican Creole.

In some areas where the speakers of creole remain in contact with its lexical donor language (e.g. in Jamaica where English is the official language), there has been a historical tendency to drop its most noticeable non-European features, often (but not always) replacing them with European ones – or what are taken to be such. This process of *decreolization* can result in a *continuum* of varieties from those farthest from the superstrate (the *basilect*) to those closest (the *acrolect*), with *mesolectal* or intermediate varieties between them. After a number of generations some varieties lose all but a few vestiges of *creole features* (those not found in the superstrate) through decreolization, resulting in *post-creole* varieties such as (according to some) African American Vernacular English or Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese. (HOLM, 2000, p. 9-10).

An empiric observation of the Jamaican language situation may lead to the perception that HOLM (2000) is correct, because at the surface, Jamaica shows issues similar to those the author has pointed out. Many Jamaicans themselves look around them and see such things as Standard English lexical items being used and different varieties of Creole being spoken all over the island. In this regard, DECAMP (1977, p. 43) presents a notion leaning towards the decreolization view when proposing the term “post-creole community” “to distinguish the situation in Jamaica from that of Surinam and Haiti”, arguing that in a “post-creole continuum like Jamaica the extreme non-standard variety would be unquestionably a creole [with] an English relexification of a proto pidgin-creole. But in a post-creole community this process of Anglicization has continued” (DECAMP, 1971, p. 46).

The assertion in DECAMP (1971, p. 46) seems a bit confusing, as the situation of Jamaican Creole seems to be measured by its proximity to English (Anglicization), or its position as an extreme relexified English. It looks like Jamaican Creole is some sort of ‘English’ after all. In this regard, DECAMP (1977) seems to be following the approach provided in BICKERTON (1981):



The result of decreolization is to create a continuum of intermediate varieties between Creole and superstrate. If the process is sufficiently long and intense, the continuum may be progressively eroded at its Creole end. The result may be a synchronic state in which the most conservative variety recoverable is already considerably different from (and considerably closer to the superstrate than) the original Creole. (Cited in ESCURE, 1997, p. 62).

BICKERTON's (1981) understanding of the Creole development as a process of decreolization seems to be focussed mostly on the internal processes and specific formal features that characterise the development of Creole languages; hence the reference to what the Jamaican language is perceived to *look like*. On the contrary, MUFWENE (2003) opposed the views proposed in DECAMP (1968) and BICKERTON (1981), arguing that:

- a) Creoles are not monolithic; hence changes involve linguistic, socio-historical and psychological factors. So, the loss of basilectal forms may be related more to a loss in prestige and social status than to decreolization (OP. CIT, p. 77);
- b) Instead of losing their basilectal forms, many Creoles evolve towards its Basilect (OP. CIT, p. 108).
- c) Creole development involves ethnographic conditions relating to the circumstances surrounding speakers due to their geographic dislocation, or adaptation to linguistic forms required for interaction, but that should not be understood as decreolization but as a gradual language restructuring towards the Acrolect (OP. CIT, p. 109);
- d) The changes in Creole languages may be seen as similar to any and all changes occurring in other languages, regardless of its condition as subordinate or not. (OP. CIT, p.109).

ESCURE (1997, p. 61) also contests the theories in DECAMP (1968) and BICKERTON (1981) arguing that the resulting linguistic situation is “complex and multifaceted” and “one aspect of this complexity is that the Creole continuum does not eventually dissolve into a standard but develops its own innovative standard, the “acrolect” or a set of “acrolects”. Such view may be observed in Jamaica, where Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole are co-existing, but as two different languages, due to their pronunciation, lexicon and grammatical distinctiveness (WINFORD, 2001, p.1). VEITCH (2005) also contests the notion of decreolization, asserting the impossibility of reverting the fusion created by creolization:

Decreolization is a hypothesized form of language shift in which parts of the community that formerly spoke a basilect, gradually acquire the forms of the acrolect. In complete decreolization, the basilect gradually disappears, and the population eventually comes to speak the standard language...However, if mergers occurred in the process of Creole formation, then direct descendants of the resulting merged dialect could never unmerge those sounds. If truly complete decreolization in fact occurred, then mergers would have to be reversed, so that the decreolized dialect is just like the (never-merged) standard. Otherwise there would remain differences

between the speech descending from the Creole and the standard to which it assimilates. Can we reconcile a view of Creole development with the impossibility of unmergers? This discussion is inconclusive, with respect to Jamaican Creole, but it proposes a rule of inference from which, once the linguistic facts are clarified, the historical facts which resulted in them may be inferred. (OP. CIT, p. 25).

Contention arises when the lenses used to observe the Jamaican language situation are different. From a rhizomatic perspective, for instance, it would be possible to agree with HOLM (2000) if considering his proposal that there are multiple varieties of Jamaican Creole, as rhizomes growing out in the Jamaican language situation, and that there are Standard English lexical items that do form part of the regular stock in speakers' use, since they have been part of the multiple language inputs to the process. When Jamaican Creole is seen as a rhizome, then the proposal in HOLM (2000) can be contested, first of all, because the language is not seen as *final* product, having stages and a "post" phase. The notion of a continuum, hence, would be seen exactly as what the word means, a continuous and endless development process. Such perspective has motivated the proposal of the term *transcreolization* as opposed to *decreolization*.

#### **2.4.3. Jamaican Creole versus Decreolization**

In observing the language variation of Jamaica, DECAMP (1977) describes the linguistic situation as a "post-Creole community" (p. 46), based on a language development seen as a "post-Creole continuum". The notion of Creole continuum includes a language stratification that ranges from the *basilect*, generally associated with persons in rural areas and those with the lowest educational and socioeconomic levels; an intermediary level, or *mesolect*; and the *acrolect*, the dialect closest to Standard Jamaican English, usually spoken in urban communities and social sectors with the highest educational levels. Contesting the vagueness of a clear-cut division among language varieties, PATRICK (2003) presents an account of such language stratification stating that:

In truth, both poles of the continuum are idealized abstractions, a collection of features most like standard Englishes (the acrolect) or most distant from them (basilect). Yet between these poles lies the continuum of everyday speech: a series of minimally differentiated grammars with extensive variation – an apparently seamless web connecting two idealized varieties, which arose in the same place and time-frame and share distinctive features, yet cannot be genetically related. (OP. CIT, p. 3).

What PATRICK (2003) sees as "idealized abstractions" brings to mind the "language invention" proposal in MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007). Apparently, it has been the task of linguists to analyse the linguistic situation of Jamaica and, after careful observation, describe

and name what is perceived to be three stages in the development of Jamaican Creole. It has been observed and reported that the so-called “basilect” in Jamaica, like in other Creole-speaking countries, shows features that point to more ‘original’ Creole forms, specially seen in rural communities and among older persons, and that such forms seem to have disappeared from use in urban communities or among educated sectors of the population. GORDON (2014) provides a plausible explanation for such situation:

Often what are considered the most authentic forms of a creolised language are those that have sedimented precisely because the encounters of people that initially produced them have significantly dwindled due to more extensive racial segregation and isolation as a result of changed social norms or economic mandates or through the abandonment of efforts to assure that benefits distributed by local, national, or regional governments are equitably dispersed. (Op. Cit., p. 79).

GORDON (2014) is bringing into the picture the impact of extra-linguistic factors relating to socioeconomic and geographical issues that, in the case of Jamaica, also seem to play a part, given the perceived interdependence between linguistic and socioeconomic stratifications. Cartographic observations from the field environment, as well as assertions from the teachers interviewed during this research, seem to indicate that those classed as *basilectal speakers* are mostly concentrated in rural areas and poor urban communities.

DECAMP (1977), and other linguists who have “preferred to focus on these extremes” (PATRICK, 2003), consider the *basilect* and *acrolect* as definite stages situated at the extreme poles of the linguistic scale, PATRICK (2003) discusses the typical features of the *mesolect*, arguing its relevance as the true “Jamaican Creole”<sup>30</sup>, and proposes that, in fact, *mesolectal* speakers do include the vast majority of Jamaican Creole users.

In purely social and demographic terms, the most important variety in Jamaica is the intermediate one known as the mesolect; its broad limits include the speech uttered by most Jamaicans, in most situations. Although empirical data for language description of JamC are nearly always drawn from points within the continuum (i.e. the mesolect), it remains undertheorized and underdescribed. (PATRICK, 2003, p.3).

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<sup>30</sup> “Despite the defining presence of English elements, which mark it off clearly from the basilect, the mesolect shares with the latter many constraints, structures and organizing principles which are not generally characteristic of native dialects of English. Insofar as creoles are defined through such contrasts (Mühleisen 2002), the mesolect is thus Jamaican Creole, and not Jamaican English (i.e. it cannot be genetically related to English). Indeed, it probably appeared earlier than the basilect (Alleyne 1971). English-like surface forms (some exclusive to the mesolect, e.g. *did*, others shared with the acrolect, e.g. *neva*, or even the basilect, e.g. *ben* — all three tense-markers are discussed below) characteristically alternate with zero, governed by constraints shared with basilectal JamC but not with native Englishes. This pattern is found in both earlier Jamaican texts and contemporary speech.” (PATRICK, 2003:4),

An interesting point in this regard is the definition of Standard Jamaican English. In the linguistic stratification discussed above, the *acrolect* seems to be close to Standard Jamaican English, and PATRICK (2003) does use the term “Standard Jamaican English” to define it. DECAMP (1968), in turn, clarifies the term *Jamaican English*, which is not quite clear in CASSIDY (1961), stating that it refers to the variety of English developed in Jamaica:

The ‘standard’ is not standard British, as many Jamaicans claim; rather it is an evolving standard Jamaican (or perhaps standard West Indian) English which is mutually intelligible with, undeniably different from, standard British. Each Jamaican speaker commands a span of this continuum, the breath of the span depending on the breath of his social contacts; a labor leader, for example, commands a greater span of varieties than does a suburban middle-class housewife. (DECAMP, 1968, p. 350).

*Acrolect* users are perceived to be hierarchically positioned at the highest levels of the socioeconomic stratification in Jamaica: they enjoy better living conditions, as well better educational and socioeconomic opportunities. Such perception was communicated during the JLU (2005) Attitude Research, which indicates that “only 8.8% of the sample thought that the Patwa speaker would have more money” (OP. CIT. p. 21). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the *acrolect* is associated with speakers’ upper class standards and their social prestige

JamC is natively available to nearly all Jamaicans, but Standard Jamaican English (StJamE) [...] is not – it is a home language for a small minority, and learned as a second language of school, literacy, mass media and work by others. This is the direct result of the colonial distribution of power in earlier centuries, which worked to create and maximize the norms that still devalue JamC and elevate StJamE. Many Jamaicans, and even many linguists (Creole-speaking and other), still maintain this contrast in prestige as a base component of their attitudes towards Jamaican language, and it surfaces in many linguistic descriptions. (PATRICK, 2003, p.2).

It would be pertinent to reiterate that the language division/stratification discussed offers important elements to broaden the knowledge about the language situation in Jamaica as one that reflects the socioeconomic stratification existing in the island, particularly the fact that Jamaican Creole continues to be “inseparably associated with poverty, ignorance, and lack of moral character” (DECAMP, 1971:40). However, it is also important to bear in mind that such divisive line is merely a linguistic methodological approach. Considering the fluid nature of language, and based on the proposed rhizomatic perspective, it may prove unwise to group all language users in one category, or affirm that all upper-class, rich-neighbourhood dwellers are Standard English users, nor that all ‘ghetto’ residents are strictly Creole users. It has been observed that some ‘ghetto’ residents are educated enough to speak Standard Jamaican English

and, conversely, some members of the upper social stratum are mostly Creole users<sup>31</sup>. Likewise it would be suitable to see the spatial language division/stratification discussed as relating to socioeconomic and ideological factors that work as inputs/triggers causing ruptures in language varieties and fostering a consequential development.

#### **2.4.3.1. Decreolization of Jamaican Creole?**

The captioned question derives from the discussion above. It is understandable that responses to such question will be complex and multiple, based on the existing multiplicity of criteria, which impedes looking at such matter from one exclusive angle. The lengthy discussion ensued may offer material for another thesis. Nonetheless, the response in this thesis shall be based on a perspective that sees language as a general all-encompassing and rhizomatic phenomenon; by virtue of which, both the external and observable language forms (sounds, words, grammar) as well as the internal (ideological, discursive) forms are similarly essential, and both are situated within a contextual (socioeconomic, sociocultural, socio-political and socio-historical) framework.

From this perspective, therefore, language development involves a vast array of social, cultural, historical, political, economic and ideological factors that determine the direction of new roots and bulbs, evinced in new uses or language forms. Hence, Jamaican Creole, just as any other language, involves social, historical, economic, political and ideological aspects specifically related to that country. Such aspects determine the specific form and content of Jamaican Creole, hence impeding any attempt to look at it simply as part of a “group of languages”. On the contrary, if seen as a “genuine language” (DECAMP, 1971:46), then it would be fair to treat it as such, and study it as a phenomenon typical of Jamaica.

Nowadays, Jamaican Creole is perceptibly a consolidated medium of communication in the island. Empiric observations point towards an extended use in all aspects of social life, including contexts such as classrooms (at all educational levels), judicial courts (including judges and attorneys), and Parliament. Another observable fact is code-switching between Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English as a regular and socially acceptable practice<sup>32</sup>. Obviously, this language has grown to the point in which it is no longer confined to walls of

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<sup>31</sup> In Jamaica, many celebrities (mostly artistes, musicians and actors) live in upscale neighbourhoods because they have money to purchase those houses, but they continue to use Jamaican Creole in their daily interactions as well as in their artistic creations. There are also some athletes who have become wealthy due to their professional careers and have moved from their impoverished inner-city dwellings, but also continue to use Jamaican Creole on a regular basis.

<sup>32</sup> Code-switching occurs for various reasons and during different communicative circumstances. SANCHEZ (2007) discusses the use of code-switching as a discursive strategy in a tertiary education institution. SANCHEZ (2005) discusses code-switching as a strategy to communicate in dramatic situations, or in hypercorrection.

informal/home interaction. Jamaican Creole has, indeed, reached an ambit where, as CANAGARAJAH (2013:6) puts it, “communication transcends individual language [and] words, and involves diverse semiotic resources [in addition to language] and ecological affordances”.

It may be argued that in today’s Jamaican societies such ‘ecological affordances’ are quite significant, and demand particular language uses in particular circumstances. Such observation prompted DECAMP (1977) to assert that, in Jamaica, “a housewife may make a limited adjustment downward on the continuum in order to communicate with a market woman, and the market woman may adjust upward when she talks to the housewife (DECAMP 1977, p. 43).

It was, indeed, an interesting observation at the time DECAMP (1977) presented his study; when using a particular register during a communicative situation in Jamaica was seen as an “adjustment downward” or “upward”, depending on who was talking to whom. However, at present, the “ecological affordances” in Jamaica have changed and, instead of a “downward-upward” adjustment, it seems more like a convenient code selection to suit the requirements of a communicative situation, within a context where regular use seems to be switching from the dictates of ‘appropriateness’ towards an openness leading to the acceptance of Jamaican Creole as ‘equal’ in the language landscape of Jamaica.

One determinant factor in said expanded use of Jamaican Creole seems to result from the role of the press, particularly radio and television. SÁNCHEZ (2007) presents a discussion on the use of Jamaican Creole in several television programmes that show a series of interviews with Jamaicans of all societal and educational levels. Without a pre-determined script or location, programmes like *Hill n’ Gully Ride* and *Talk yuh Talk* present spontaneous personal positions in regards to social issues in rural and urban areas. It was observed that the language of choice for such impromptu interviews was Jamaican Creole, and even if speakers started speaking Standard Jamaican English, they would switch to Jamaican Creole as the interview heated up. Nowadays, it is common to see a switch from Standard Jamaican English to Jamaican Creole whenever speakers try to express their innermost passions; even at extremely formal contexts like Parliament and judicial courts. Jamaican Creole is also often observed in television programmes that are normally conducted in Standard English, like *Smile Jamaica* or *Profile*, whenever the conductors or guests feel like giving a special touch to their message.

The ubiquitous presence of Jamaican Creole in most aspects of life in the island seems to indicate that the language is far from losing its features. On the contrary, the language

corpus<sup>33</sup> seems quite stable and solidly recognizable as compared to other languages. As asserted in PATRICK (2003, p. 4):

[It] is an organized, distinctive collection of elements with a long history and its own complex norms, structures and social patterning. Many choices and variants are possible within it, but many are not. Ways of speaking are not accidental but conventionalized; borrowing occurs, but is not the sole source of variation; grammatical rules exist and interlock; and it is transmitted through normal language acquisition.

The assertion above brings to mind that, rather than moving upward and downward in the language registries, the language situation of Jamaica may be termed as one of bilingualism, with two different languages functioning, beyond any language policy implication/restriction, as two socially accepted language codes. Quoting BENITO (2004:18), SÁNCHEZ (2006) presents three factors that may have contributed to the stabilization of Jamaican Creole as observed today:

- a) The reaffirmation of a national identity accelerated by the process leading to the Declaration of Independence in 1962;
- b) the impact of Rastafarianism after the 1960's, and
- c) the rapid urbanization that brought about significant demographic changes and the emergence of varied social language networks, and a wide interaction between persons from different social and geographical origin.

The factors quoted above may be seen as valid references in understanding the development process of Jamaican Creole, as they cover a wider range of socio-political, socioeconomic, sociocultural, as well as demographic and religious aspects characterising the life in Jamaica. It may be safely said that those factors continue to impact through an array of sociocultural phenomena taking place in the island, including the cultural and linguistic explosion caused by the growth and international expansion of Jamaican music, particularly Reggae, reflected in the observed imitation of Jamaica life-style and language in many other communities in other countries. Another relevant issue in this regard may be observed in the developments within the political arena, where the trend of using Jamaican Creole seems to be growing; not only because renown politicians are in fact, Creole speakers, but also because most are using the language in their rallies. An interesting finding of the JLU (2005) Attitude Survey in this regard points out that:

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<sup>33</sup> Linguistic studies on Jamaican Creole usage, as well as its corpus, point at a stabilized usage of language forms at all levels in the social ladder, as discussed in CASSIDY (1961), PATRICK (1999), PATRICK (2003), DURRLEMAN (2008).

When asked what they would think if the Prime Minister or Minister of Finance made his speech in Patwa, 67.8% of the sample responded that they would think he was trying to “communicate better with the public”. Only 20.6% of respondents believed that the Ministers would be trying to “talk down to the masses”. (OP. CIT, p. 16).

It is an interesting finding in the sense that most participants saw the use of Jamaican Creole as a positive event, something perhaps unthinkable before the 1980’s. It is also worth of noticing that 20.6% still sees Jamaican Creole (“Patwa”) as inferior, hence their interpretation as a “talk-down” attempt by politicians. It would be interesting if such survey was repeated: it may not be erroneous to expect that the ratio will change, based on the observation of Jamaica’s current language situation.

SIEGEL (2010), PATRICK (1994, 1999) e MUFWENE (1994, 2002) argue that the term *decreolization*, a) fails to “clarify which aspect of the language is decreolized: the lexicon, the grammar, the sociolect, or the entire linguistic community, or all of them?” (SEIGEL, 2010, p. 84); b) it creates confusion by including the Creole Continuum, the Mesolect, and the processes of change in one sack (PATRICK, 1999, p.16), c) remains an insecure notion: “insufficiently distinguished from ordinary change processes, possibly conceptually incoherent, and certainly not adequately supported by diachronic investigations to date” (PATRICK, 1999, p.19). Furthermore, studies conducted by the University of the West Indies Jamaica Language Unit have found that Jamaican Creole is far from being decreolized. On the contrary, it is going through a process of transformation and it is growing stronger and more stabilized.

It would be worthy, therefore, to argue that the so-called decreolization of Jamaican Creole is unacceptable because:

a) The definition of a Creole language (if going along with the term ‘creole’ and if defining a language) needs to include any and all evolutionary processes which may have occurred in the speakers’ lives and their societies on account of the social and cultural contact/dialogue they experienced, and which served as the basis for the emergence and development of such new linguistic product within that particular socio-cultural context;

b) The term Creolization suggests that Jamaican Creole, as perceived today, is the result of a language evolutionary process; which, if seen from a broader rhizomatic perspective, indicates that Jamaican Creole is a rhizome that continues to grow exponentially. Hence, on the basis of such broader perspective, then Jamaican Creole cannot revert its course(s);



c) If departing from the understanding that Jamaican Creole development was not an abrupt event, then it would be fair to assume the language shall evolve following processes similar to those followed by all other languages;

d) The rhizomatic development of Jamaican Creole leads to the formation of new language roots and bulbs that lead to the formation of rhizomes in the form of language varieties. Such changes cannot be reversed; they can only be transformed on account of their adaptation to the users' communicational needs.

Therefore, following the proposal of using a rhizomatic approach to studying the development of Jamaican Creole, it may be noted that the growth and establishment of the Jamaican Creole rhizome has involved social, historical, political, cultural and demographic factors unique to Jamaica<sup>34</sup>. The discussion above shows the relevance of some factors that have contributed to establishing the bases for the consolidation and raise in prestige of Jamaican Creole; despite the prevalence of negative attitudes around the language.

The consolidation of Jamaican Creole, hence, speaks against the alleged decreolization; particularly because such perspective limits the understanding of the nature of Jamaican Creole development as an authentic linguistic product. Jamaican Creole should not be seen as a temporary linguistic form; but as a rhizome grown out of a dialogic situation between heterogeneous cultures and languages. It should be regarded as a fresh bulb that continues to expand and transform into a rhizome; instead of a finished linguistic product that, having reached its "latest" stage of development, is losing features in favour of another 'superior' language and, what is left of it, remains as the restricted use of "old and uneducated persons" (ESCURE, 1997, p. 61, citing Bailey, 1996).

A perspective such as decreolization is indefensible if a different approach is followed to explain Creole language development. In this regard, it would be pertinent to refer to BOLLAND (2005) when affirming that the term 'post-Creole' is a mistaken approach because it implies the possibility of dividing or making cuts in the development process of a language, which implies a fallacy in terms such as *post* or *neo* Creole. It is a mistaken approach because it suggests the existence of a break with the past when, on the contrary, the "interaction and transformation of Caribbean languages is a continuous process" (Op.Cit, p. 11).

On the other hand, it would be fitting to consider Creole languages in general, and Jamaican Creole in particular, as part of a broader phenomenon; given that the term 'Creole'

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<sup>34</sup> LALLA & DACOSTA (1990), PATRICK (2003) Mühleisen (2002), POLLARD (1984) present detailed discussions on the historical, cultural and sociolinguistic factors mentioned here. SANCHEZ (2007) also presents a discussion on the importance of literature, especially poetry in the consolidation of Jamaican Creole.

involves the entire cultural phenomenon around speakers. If Creole languages are understood as the languages spoken by Creole peoples, then the definition of *Creole* involves the entire spectrum that reflects the whole socio-historical and sociocultural reality of the so-called Creole societies; that is, any and all language variation occurred is a result of the entire historical development and the dialogic social contact occurred in the region. Such broadened understanding about the Creole phenomenon justifies the proposal that the alleged decreolization is a myth, given that it would be impossible to *decreolize* societies that are consolidated, with new sociocultural patterns that respond to the new circumstances resulting from the process of colonization. It is not possible to revert the development of Creole languages as much as it is impossible to revert a rhizomatic development.

The Creole phenomenon transcends language, and since it involves the entire spectrum of Jamaican life, to talk about decreolization shall equate to talking about an unlikely de-Jamaicanization. Decreolization may be acceptable, however, if proposed from a perspective that sees the transformation process, not as the “abandonment” of “its most notable characteristics as a non- European language”; but a language that is “acquiring” its authentic features; not as a “Creole” that is the offspring of an European “mother”, but as the full-fledged Jamaican language, as shown by the fact that, at present, the language continues to evolve and has achieved a recognizable social use, beyond informal contexts.

A consideration of Jamaican Creole as a rhizome growing out of the dialogic contact between and among the cultural groups that coincided in Jamaica may offer a more adequate approach to the study of the language as a new authentic creation resulting from development circumstances unique to Jamaican speakers, growing new roots, which keep growing to create new rhizomes, proving the development of the language as an infinitely transformational process.

#### **2.4.4. Transcreolization versus Decreolization.**

Caribbean Creole studies have profited from instrumental contributions, including among others, MUFWENE (1994, 1996, 1998, 2001), ALLEYNE (1980), PATRICK (1994, 2003), BRATHWAITE (2005), CASSIDY (2007), SIEGEL (2010), DEVONISH (1986), DEGRAFF (2003, 2005), which have offered important perspectives in problematizing the notion of decreolization. Based on such perspectives, it may be argued that: (a) the definition of Creole needs to be revised and broadened to give consideration to the entire evolutionary process of the societies categorised as “Creole”, proposing an approach that sees those societies as **new** societies that have created **new** and specific linguistic and cultural contexts; b) creolization involves a rhizomatic development of societies and their languages. Hence, as

products of their particular evolutionary processes, Creole societies and languages are moving towards a stage of consolidation (rhizome), which shall continue to erupt into new future roots and bulbs; (c) Creole language development is not abrupt nor different; it has followed a process similar to all other languages.

Generally, it is possible to find that most linguistic studies known today present a wide range of reasons for language historical development. A glance at studies on historical linguistics points towards the relationship that exists between the development of language and society; hence the need to consider that important relationship when touching on the matter. Early language studies such as those of Roman philosopher Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BC – 27 BC) had already exposed an understanding of how social use promotes language development, and how both are always in motion. His assertions in this regard contributed to lay the basis for understanding language growth and variation, as well as the birth of language varieties as a result of the progressive accumulation of changes that eventually become part of the regular language stock speakers draw from to interact in society:

Therefore, since difference prevails not only in clothing and in buildings, but also in furniture, in food, and in all the other things which have been taken into our daily life for use, the principle of difference should not be rejected in human speech either, which has been framed for the purpose of use. (PAGE, et al, 1938, p. 393).<sup>35</sup>

Varro's analysis shows his understanding in respect to the development of Latin; but it is indeed a useful logic that can be applied when analysing modern languages development process; given that said development process is a natural occurrence whose roots may be traced back to speakers' actions, or in Varro's words to the "regularities" that exist in nature but not in words", and that "man shapes them each as he wills" (PAGE, et al, 1938, p. 463).<sup>36</sup>

Varro's proposal regarding regularity and difference is interesting to the issue being discussed; first of all, because it shows the speaker's capacity to change language "as he wills", and it also offers a hint as to how far back the understanding of language malleability can be traced, whilst also indicating who the ultimate responsible for language change is. Logically, as a man of his time, Varro would not escape the limitations of his era, especially when he sees part of language change as "errors" that appear in daily use:

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<sup>35</sup> In the Latin original: "Quare cum, in vestitu aedificiis, sic in supellectile cibo ceterisque omnibus quae usus (causa) ad vitam sunt assumpta dominetur inaequabilitas, in sermone quoque, qui est usus causa constitutus, ea non repudianda.

<sup>36</sup> Hominum partibus esse analogias, quod eas natura faciat, in verbis non esse, quod ea homines ad suam quisque voluntatem fingat.

Since even that physician is not to be censured who makes a healthier man out of one who has been ill as a result of a long-continued bad habit, why should he be blamed who brings into better condition a way of speech which has been less effective on account of bad use? (PAGE, et al, 1938, p. 443).<sup>37</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that Varro does not refer to error correction based on grammar rules; but he states that errors are measured according to *use*. In his opinion “use and regularity happen to be closer than we think” (P.443), because regularity grows out of use.

For Regularity is sprung from a certain use in speech, and from this use likewise is sprung Anomaly. Therefore, since use consists of unlike and like words and their derivative forms, neither Anomaly nor Regularity is to be cast aside, unless man is not of soul because he is of body and of soul. (PAGE, et al, 1938, p. 443).<sup>38</sup>

It may be stated that the assertion above allows grasping a rhizomatic view in relation to language development, as the reader may notice how new roots and bulbs are growing and then becoming rhizomes; as they stabilize through use<sup>39</sup>. Hence use is constantly growing and constantly changing. Such understanding of change being too revolutionary for his time, Varro came up with an elegant solution to his argument by assuring that Regularity *orderly* lies on the speaker: “the speaker observes the use he needs to apply, but with the theory in mind” (PAGE, et al, 1938, p. 447).

Therefore, language development depends heavily on the changes experienced. As times goes by, speech communities adapt their language to their living circumstances, which may explain use change. Speakers will create new words or adapt old ones to new situations. Language structures change as well, for several reasons that may range from economy of effort up to unawareness of the language established use rules.

The use of speech is always shifting its position... words spoken wrongly by some of the old-timers are on account of the poets' influence now spoken correctly, and on the other hand some that were then spoken according to logical theory, are now spoken wrongly. (PAGE, et al, 1938, p. 452).<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to note, however, that Varro relates ‘Use Change’ with the work of poets; not the common folks. Such stance has been replicated in other contexts; as is the case

<sup>37</sup> Cum vetuperandus non sit medicus qui e longinqua mala consuetudine aegrum in meliorem traducit, quare reprehendendus sit qui orationem minus valentem propter malam consuetudinem traducat in meliorem?

<sup>38</sup> Quod est nata ex quadam consuetudine analogia et ex hac (consuetudine item anomalia. Quare quod\* consuetudo ex dissimilibus et similibus verbis eorumque' declinationibus constat, neque anomalia neque analogia est repudianda, nisi si non est homo ex anima, quod est\* ex corpore et anima.

<sup>39</sup> It is known that, as languages develop many words become obsolete, while others start to be used differently.

<sup>40</sup> Consuetude loquendi est in motu... verba perperam dicta apud antiquos aliquos propter poetas non modo nunc dicuntur recte, sed etiam quae ratione dicta sunt turn, nunc perperam dicuntur.

of the writings of celebrated poets and writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer, in England, or Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, in Spain. In Varro's time, poets used to perform their chants, namely heroic deeds of great warriors, or great men. It is probable that the repeated performance of those bards, who were generally travelling from place to place, or the repetition of the same chants by different bards or poets had an impact on establishing use. It has been said that the aforementioned writers played a defining role in the stabilization of written English and Spanish, providing written "models" (OLSON, 1993, p.6) for regular speech in the *new*<sup>41</sup> languages that were being used in their times. The role of written literary documents in the establishment of particular languages is not strange to Jamaica either. Such notion surfaces when referring to the works of poets like Claude McKay and Louise Bennett, especially the latter who is well-known for her poems fully written in Jamaican Creole. Hence, Varro's proposal in relation to the role of poetry in the stabilization of language 'use regularities', albeit ancient, has relevance for understanding the evolution of languages as a result of changes and/or adaptation carried out by members of society.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that despite the undeniable role writing has played in proving models for spoken language varieties, and "awareness of [their] linguistic structure" (OLSON, 1993, p.2), it does not include the entire range language forms can achieve.

The evolutionary development of scripts, including the alphabet, is the simple consequence of attempting to use a graphic system invented to be 'read' in one language, for which it is thereby reasonably suited, to convey messages to be 'read' in another language for which it is not well suited. In each case the development of a functional way of communicating with visible marks was, simultaneously, a discovery of the representable structures of speech. (OLSON, 1993, p. 2).

That is to say, the written form of a language can be *read* if focussing on the external aspect of the language items presented. But writing is not fully *suited* to convey all the possible twists and turns entangled in the encompassing wealth of speech. OLSON (1994) provides interesting insights in trying to demystify the overpowering role assigned to writing in contemporary societies on account of the "beliefs and assumptions" that: (1) writing is the transcription of speech; (2) writing is superior to speech; (3) the writing alphabet is technologically superior; (4) literacy [is] the organ of social progress; (5) literacy [is] an instrument of cultural and scientific development; (6) literacy [is] an instrument of cognitive development.

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<sup>41</sup> Instead of using French, the official language at the time, Chaucer chose to write in Anglo-Saxon, the language spoken in farm houses and rural areas by peasants. Cervantes wrote in Castilian, the official language of the Spanish empire, which may explain why it is known by many as Spanish.

There is no point in denying that the beliefs and assumptions cited above permeate contemporary mentalities; as is observed in Jamaica as well, where many are of the opinion that Jamaican Creole cannot be considered as a language, per se, citing a perceived lack of a written form<sup>42</sup>, with the required bulk of literary creations.

Nonetheless, Varro's ideas continue to impact contemporary language studies; particularly in the area of historical linguistics and sociolinguistics: BYNON (1977), HOENIGSWALD (1960), LASS (1997), MILROY (1992), THOMASON, et al (2001), MARK (2005), and (WINFORD (2003), HOLM (2000), KOUWENBERG (2008), GUUS & MUYSKEN (1977), SCHNEIDER (2008), WINFORD (2003) more specifically about the historical development of Creole languages. Such studies have brought about a deeper understanding of language as a living organism that is born, grows and is transformed<sup>43</sup> according to the socio-historical and socio-geographical developments affecting its speakers.

A speech community, determined, for example, by the geographical space shared among speakers, adopts and manifests certain aspects that characterize their language variety. However, that consensus may change with the passing of time, and that happens regularly. (RODRÍGUEZ, 2016, p. 2).

The preceding assertion reflects Varro's notion of 'Use Regularity' as one characteristic element of the language shared by a speech community. Such notion is also fitting to the Jamaican language situation, especially because it allows understanding that the evolution of Jamaican Creole, as well as its growing use among speakers, serves well to belie linguistic theories such as those found in WHINNOM (1968) and HOLM (2000); proposing the existence of a decreolization process, characterised by the tendency of a language to "abandon its most notable characteristics as a non- European language" (HOLM, 2004, p.10).

Therefore, the proposal in this thesis is that the transformation process of Jamaican Creole could be viewed as a *transcreolization* process; based firstly on a rhizomatic perspective for the analysis of language development. It would be fitting to reiterate that the use of the term "Creole" and its derivations is merely an attempt to focus on a different perspective without necessarily questioning traditional terminology. Secondly, it is important to point out that, even when the term *transcreolization* is a neologism used to oppose the term *decreolization*, it is

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<sup>42</sup> Such perception was observed during the interview process, as most participants stated that there is not a considerable written production to warrant the status of language for Jamaican Creole (see Chapter XXX).

<sup>43</sup> Not from the perspective of the German linguist August Schleicher, who "described languages as natural organisms that come into being, develop, age, and die" (HOLM, 2000, p.1), due to laws beyond the control of its speakers. The assumption in this thesis, -on the contrary, is that it is the speakers who transform languages according to their circumstantial needs. Languages dies only if speakers stop using them altogether, for a myriad of reasons, all conducive to total abandonment.

indeed a borrowing/derivation from the term *transculturación*, used by the Cuban scholar Don Fernando ORTIZ in his essay *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco el azúcar* (1940) to analyse the matter of ethnic and social development in the Caribbean<sup>44</sup>.

The rhizomatic perspective proposed for the analysis of Jamaican Creole aims at viewing the language as a process of constant and transformative development; shown through a constant growth of new roots and bulbs that continue to evolve towards *rhizomes*, represented by language varieties in town or parish spatial areas and that together shape the phenomenon termed Jamaican Creole. However, development does not stop there, those rhizomes are constantly growing roots and new bulbs, which will grow into new rhizomes, and the process continues<sup>45</sup>.

Seeing Jamaican Creole development as a transcreolization process allows moving along the line of a perspective that views the Jamaican Creole language as a new linguistic form growing from that confluence of multiple cultural inputs within the specific space provided by the island. One angle of analysis concerning the proposal of *transcreolization* in Jamaica could be based on the consideration of Fredrick Engel's theory on the Laws of Dialectics – *Unity and Struggle of Opposites, Negation of Negation and Quantitative and Qualitative Changes*. Such angle also lies at the basis of Don Fernando Ortiz's transculturation theory.

If applied to language development, Engels's Laws of Dialectics would allow to view the development of Jamaican Creole as a product of the convergence and merging of multiple and diverse cultural groups within the same socio-geographical context (what Engels called "Unity and Struggle of Opposites"). As a result of such co-existence and despite using different languages, speakers would end up accepting, borrowing, appropriating and sharing whichever language items and terms were needed to facilitate their interaction within that space; thus achieving communication and making their lives easier (called "Quantitative Changes" by Engels). In the process, a new form of their original languages would begin to grow, enriched

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<sup>44</sup> In Ortiz's words: "Entendemos que el vocablo "transculturación" expresa mejor las diferentes fases del proceso transitivo de una cultura a otra, porque éste no consiste solamente en adquirir una distinta cultura, que es lo que en rigor indica la voz angloamericana "aculturation", sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente, lo que pudiera decirse una parcial "desculturación", y además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse "neoculturación"... En todo abrazo de culturas sucede lo que en la cópula genética de los individuos: la criatura siempre tiene algo de ambos progenitores, pero también siempre es distinta de cada uno de los dos. En conjunto, el proceso es una "transculturación", y este vocablo comprende todas las fases de su parábola" (ORTIZ, 1949, p. 83).

<sup>45</sup> As previously discussed, those perceived scanty written documents in Jamaican Creole have managed to present temporary cuts within the language bulbs, and when compared, it is not rare to perceive language structure differences between early 20<sup>th</sup> century writings (Claude McKay) and more recent written productions like the Patwa Bible.

as speakers incorporated and/or created the used/new language terms and items they were using regularly for effective interaction in the new context (“Qualitative Changes”, according to Engels). In the same process, as well, speakers would drop those items/terms that were not needed for communication in the new context, which with the passing of time and the changing reality would become obsolete or disappear altogether from actual interaction among speakers (in Engels’ terms, “Negation of the Negation”)<sup>46</sup>.

Therefore, it would be fair to acknowledge that the emergence of Jamaican Creole and its development leading towards a defining and authentic language form (if understood from the traditional language definition) may, indeed, be explained within the framework of the Laws of Dialectics, based on the fact that, a) it is the language product born out of the struggle between contending forces representing different cultural contributions; b) it is a language product based on its speakers’ use consensus and motivated by the specificities of the Jamaican context; c) it is a language that has its distinctive forms as a result of the occurrence of significant quantitative and qualitative changes; and d) it is a language that has negated any and all previously regular forms in the contributing languages but that became useless in the Jamaican context; renewing or replacing them, or creating new ones, with distinctive Jamaican structural and lexical forms.

However, language development seems to be better explained through a dialogic view of the process of transformation, as described in BAKHTIN (1981, p.12):

All this set into motion a process of active, mutual cause-and effect and interillumination. Words and language began to have a different feel to them; objectively they ceased to be what they had once been. Under these conditions of external and internal interillumination, each given language -even if its linguistic composition (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, etc.) were to remain absolutely unchanged- is, as it were, reborn, becoming qualitatively a different thing for the consciousness that creates in it.

Despite the methodological value of Engels’ Laws for understanding development, it would be pertinent to be aware of their limitation when proposing a binary opposition approach to the matter. For that reason, the proposal of a notion of *transcreolization* incorporates the perspective of a rhizomatic language development; which, instead of homogeneous opposites, includes the consideration of multiple and diverse contending forces; indicating that, not only

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<sup>46</sup> In view of the scope of the current discussion, only this simplified sketch of Engels’s Dialectic Laws has been presented, as the aim is just to get a general idea about the workings of those laws in the case of Jamaican Creole development. The intention is not to present a detailed philosophical debate on the matter.



are there multiple cultural inputs (European, African, Arawak, Indian, Chinese, for instance), but also that those cultural groups were diverse and often conflicting amongst themselves.

The rhizomatic perspective, hence, guides the analysis beyond the limiting binary opposition approach proposed in Engels' Laws, and opens up the range for a different understanding of language development in Jamaica as a transformative and continuous process of rhizome formation; not as the "abandonment" of "its most notable characteristics as a non-European language" (HOLM, 2004, p.10) hence being decreolized. Thus, transcending the dialectical notion of development and aligning with a rhizomatic approach allows to see Jamaican Creole (or any other language) as a new and authentic product that cannot reverse its growth process just as roots cannot *un-grow*.

The proposal of a transcreolization approach lies on a cartographic understanding of the Jamaican society that aligns with a rhizomatic perspective to analyse the language, as well as its users' entire life spectrum. Thus, in its holistic nature, a rhizomatic perspective involves a consideration that sees Jamaican Creole as a linguistic representation of all things Jamaican, thus encompassing the whole range of Jamaican sociocultural, socio-historical, socio-political and socioeconomic context. If seen from this cartographic perspective, then the notion of decreolization is untenable, being then more pertinent to regard the process of (Jamaican) Creole development as one of rhizomatic transformation; i.e., one that belies language loss and favours language constant growth and transformation into new and continuously growing rhizomes.

## **2.5. Transcreolization. Changing Lenses.**

An observation of Jamaican society, from the past to the present, may reveal how Jamaican Creole has been transformed; achieving visibility in ambits where it was unaccepted and unacceptable before. Such increased relevance has also prompted heated discussions around the language and related matters; such as the history and culture of the Jamaican people; also bringing to the forefront and questioning traditional positions purporting an alleged inferiority and irrelevance of Creole speakers for universal history.

Such positioning has much to do with Western notions of historicity, as the alleged "lack of history on account of a lack of creativity" declared by NAIPAUL (1962, p.29); a view so painfully limited that offered little (if any) space to appreciate and understand the history of peoples like Jamaicans; traditionally judged by their *looks* rather than their *worth*, under the precepts of Western historiography. The fact is that, for many centuries, Western civilization has imposed a historical and ideological position that has equated a lack of historical value with the lack of enormous cathedrals, gold-covered buildings, symphonic orchestras, "classic"

literatures, and all other “cultural” aspects, understood from the perspective afforded by Western lenses.

A closer look into the Jamaican society, however, will offer enough historical material to allow the observer to draw different conclusions in regards to the creativity, as well as the cultural and historical worth of Jamaican people. That is to say, as long as such observer enters the field wearing different lenses, a renovated perspective may reveal a vibrant sociocultural landscape; hence providing evidence to the fact that “our values, our perspectives, our ideas are established according to the *lenses* we use to perceive the world [which] though changeable, are used permanently; [allowing] us to understand the world, while at the same time limiting our perception” (JORDÃO, 2007, p. 22).

Therefore, a historical perspective other than that determined by the canons of Western civilization may open space for a different approach to the history of Jamaican people(s) and language(s); as shown by a number of studies on Caribbean societies and languages, such as CASSIDY (1950), BAILEY (1966), ALLEYNE (1980), DEVONISH (1978), BRATHWAITE (2002), PATRICK (1995), among others. Most of those studies were published during and after the decade of 1970’s, coinciding with a thrust in popular movements advocating for the honouring of African traditions and contribution to the development of Caribbean languages and cultures. Likewise, most of those studies followed a philosophical trend aimed at dignifying Creole users; thus bringing in a new perspective into various disciplines (including linguistics), and offering different stand points in connection with the notions of Creolization and Decreolization, among others.

The matter of creolization and decreolization is not free from controversy, as seen in the rich diversity of points of view and discussions around those issues, as accompanying processes in the development of Creole languages. Such controversy has helped enrich the debate and has been a logical output of the knowledge development process. From a rhizomatic perspective, such controversy is seen as a positive contribution because, being the Creole phenomenon so complex, due to its multiplicity of inputs, it is only logical for it to motivate such diversity of views. Hence, the diversity of views is welcomed, as it becomes an essential contributing factor for enhancing knowledge about the Creole phenomenon.

Some scholars, framed within the patterns of traditional Western linguistics and historiography, analyse the development of Creole languages as creations emerging from the “corruption” of other languages during circumstances of contact, particularly with European languages such as English, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Such trend of thought continues to exist today in Caribbean societies, as seen in some “unacceptable definitions that

suggest a premature classification of [Creole] languages as “mixed languages” (BACHMANN, 2013).

What we find instead in early attestations of these linguistic phenomena is a reference to these varieties as degenerate forms or corruptions of the original Romance language such as português adulterado, corrompido, corrupto, deturbado; español corrompido, chapurreado; français bâtard, corrompu, grossier, mauvais [bastard/deformed, corrupted, corrupt, distorted Portuguese; corrupted, broken Spanish; bastard, corrupted, grossier(gross, make-shift), bad French]. In addition to these terms, the more general term of gíria, jerga, jargon [jargon]. (BACHMANN, 2013, p. 275-276).

The terms presented in BACHMANN (2013) are also commonplace in the case of Jamaican Creole, even amongst Creole speakers, who are often heard calling the language *broken English*. In Jamaica, nowadays, it is still common hearing adults, especially older relatives or persons in authority, reprimand children for not speaking correctly, and the phrase “*speak properly*” actually means “*speak in English*”. Nonetheless, as observed during the research process, for most Jamaicans, it is clear that the ‘official’ status of Standard Jamaican English is more a socio-ideological than a linguistic positioning, because, “a Creole is inferior to its corresponding standard language only in social status” (DECAMP, 1968, p.31).

MUFWENE, (2000, 2001), ALLEYNE (1980) and DEGRAFF (2003) contest Western linguistic perspective, distancing themselves from the “corruption metaphors” (BACHMANN, 2013), and presenting approaches that portray Creole languages as original creations. These authors openly contest traditional views asserting that Creoles are “not languages”, per se, but corruptions of “real” languages; thus following “exceptional” processes. In opposing those views, the authors affirm that Creole languages are natural linguistic phenomena resulting from specific contact situations; which have followed formative processes similar to any other language, and, thus, deserve being studied as any other linguistic phenomenon resulting from socio-historical circumstances. MUFWENE (2001, p.1) affirms that the development of Creoles has been similar to those languages “not identified as Creoles”. DEGRAFF (2003) deepens of the importance of a suitable historical perspective by stating that:

This definition (of Creoles) is strictly atheoretical: it does not presuppose any operational structural criteria....‘Creole’ is an ostensive label that, in the Caribbean case for example, points to certain speech varieties that developed between Europeans and Africans during the colonization of the so-called New World. In a related vein, the term ‘creolization’ refers to the sequence of sociohistorical events that led to the formation of these languages known as Creoles. (OP. CIT, p. 391).

A different historical perspective would lead to seeing creolization as a socio-historical and sociolinguistic process occurring under specific contact/dialogic circumstances. In this regard, MUFWENE (2001) questions the traditional linguistic approach concerning the labelled “mothers” of Creole languages. He argues that, instead of seeing Creole development as a formation process of languages descending from one mother, it is best to understand it as kind of a “horizontal” or “polyploidic” growth “without a limit on the number of individuals or groups that can pass features on to a speaker’s idiolect” (Op.Cit, p.12). His proposal may be included within a rhizomatic perspective, when considering the multiple “polyploidic” inputs resulting in multiple radicles. The only contention would be that the rhizome cannot be considered as horizontal, but multi-spatial. Nonetheless, there is undeniable merit in approaching creolization as a kind of horizontal transmission, which could be interpreted as a levelling of the language playing field; so that categorizations such as “superior”, “inferior” and “corruption” of major languages are things of the past. It may be fitting to see all languages as relevant contributors in a similar development process<sup>47</sup>.

A different historical perspective may also allow avoiding a term such as ‘decreolization’, as viewed from the perspective followed in WHINNON (1968) and HOLM (2000). It may also offer a different angle of analysis to other Creole studies. One such case is DECAMP (1977), who despite a significant contribution to the study of Jamaican Creole, and the assertion that “Creoles are genuine languages” (p. 46), still presents a notion leaning towards the decreolization view when labelling Jamaica as a “post-Creole community”.

New lenses may provide a vision about the notion of decreolization as one that is focusing primarily on language external and perceivable aspects; thereby disregarding a consideration on how the pressures of daily life impact on Creole speakers forcing them to adjust to new circumstances of communication. A new perspective, hence, may broaden the extent of the analysis beyond a limited linguistic notion that separates language processes from its speakers’ contextual circumstances. Jamaican Creole, as any other language, does not “lose” properties because its speakers voluntarily leave out those language forms; they are compelled to do so by the communicational and discursive needs imposed by their living contexts, or due to “corrective pressures, as stated in DECAMP (1977):

The social system, though perhaps still sharply stratified, must provide for sufficient social mobility and sufficient corrective pressures from above in order for the

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<sup>47</sup> “Avoiding treating it as a regular case of language evolution, some creolists...have characterized the process (of Creole formation) as abrupt...” (But) “Creoles did not develop more rapidly than any other languages... (and) “no non-ordinary explanations are needed for the development of Creoles” (MUFWENE, 2001, p.130-134).

standard language to exert real influence on creole speakers; otherwise the creole and the standard remain sharply separated as they do in the French areas. These corrective pressures (radio, television, internal migration, education, and other government “uplift” programs) do not operate uniformly on all speakers. (DECAMP, 1977, p. 43).

Hence, when discussing language development, it is relevant to consider those factors that have an impact on speakers’ lives, and that prompt their choices. Rather than seeing decreolization as “losing” features, new lenses may allow seeing that speakers are responding to their practical and contextual needs and, in the process, transforming the language. Delving into language histories with new lenses, may show that, instead of “losing”, speakers are increasing their language repertoire by adjusting to their contexts; hence contributing to the language change/transformation and development.

Historical studies on other languages have shown loss of specific language features connected to the adaptation/evolution of such languages to new contexts, hence the understanding that internal language change and evolution processes respond to extra-linguistic factors; especially those related to socioeconomic, political, cultural and ideological drivers. Delving into speakers’ histories may reveal a connection with speaker demographic movements and spatial distribution, as well. Therefore, it may be suitable to propose that within language change processes, there may be multiple motivating inputs attached to speakers’ contextual situations, and that such changes do not indicate a reversal to original language forms; but growth into new and more effective ones. It would be pertinent to be aware of the subtle nuances of the notion of “decreolization”; which implies that Creoles *decreolize* while other languages *change*. Like rhizomes, Creoles, just as other languages, undergo a development process based on the contribution of multiple inputs and the rooting-out of multiple outputs, given that:

The mental processes underlying Creole genesis are similar to those underlying language change...What about Creoles’ alleged lexical poverty? Speakers of any language create vocabulary items as needed to fulfil their evolving representation and communication requirements...and this is what happened in the evolution of, say, the Romance languages as they progressively replaced Latin and Greek in scientific writing. Creoles are no exception to the rule. (DEGRAFF, 2003, p. 395).

The assertion in DEGRAFF (2003) is also valid when discussing the evolution of English, a language that has undergone significant changes through time, as may be observed by looking at written texts (from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* to the present). Such changes are so striking that Modern English looks more like Jamaican Creole than its proto- Germanic “mother” (DEGRAFF, 2003, p.399). An explanation for such changes will be found in the

history of conquests, prejudice and social differences lived by the peoples who have inhabited the British island.

In its development process, Modern English has lost many features and adopted several new ones, growing from Germanic to hybrid. There have been explanations for the changes in the English language, and they all revisit historical events and the users' needs to accommodate to the demands of their daily lives; i.e., to be understood and to be accepted within certain social circles. However, so far, no linguist has come up with a term such as "desenglishization". An explanation for such 'oversight' may be the fact that, compared to Jamaican Creole, English came to Jamaica as an 'imperial' language, with an "army and a navy"<sup>48</sup>, like Latin and French had done before.

The histories of Creole users and languages have been surrounded with issues of prejudice; even in cases where a Creole has 'ascended' to officialdom; such is the case of Haitian Creole that, despite having been declared as Official during the 1980's, not until 2016 was it approved as a Language of Instruction.<sup>49</sup>

The maintenance of anti-Creole stereotypes by the Haitian elite increases the economic, social, and symbolic 'capital' (in Bourdieu's 1982 [1991] sense) that French-speaking Haitians can accumulate at the expense of their monolingual Creole-speaking compatriots. This capital has often subtle and somewhat ambiguous correlates in ethnicity, race, and class [...]. From that perspective, Creolophobia-cum-Francophilia by (aspiring) middle- and upper-class Haitians who crave socioeconomic and political advantages can be analyzed as a sensible investment strategy in the linguistic markets made available by Haiti's history. (DEGRAFF, 2003, p. 402).

The facts described in DEGRAFF (2003) are not alien to the situation in Jamaica or other Caribbean islands. The JLU (2005, p.20) Attitude Research showed that a majority of participants perceived English users as "more educated [and more] intelligent". Furthermore, the field research conducted amongst Jamaican Spanish teachers, for the purposes of writing this thesis, also unveiled a perceived relationship between poverty and Creole speaking. Teachers interviewed reported that, the deeper the rural schools, the poorer the student population, and the higher their frustration on account of "deficient" learning skills among students, especially due to their status as monolingual Creole users who are receiving instruction in Standard Jamaican English. Therefore, rather than looking simply at the external

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<sup>48</sup> In the words attributed to Max Weinreich: "A language is a dialect with an army and a navy". In this case, a language is a dialect with substantial political clout and maybe a threat of separatism. (SANKAR & PFEIFER, 2006, p.110)

<sup>49</sup> See Annex A.

aspects of Creole languages, it would be preferable to take into account a wider array of surrounding socio-ideological phenomena underlying the perceived social attitudes.

In the colonial era, these antiegalitarian assumptions were part and parcel of the imperialist construction of political, cultural, and racial hegemony and the concomitant discursive elaboration of scientific authority through scholarly (-looking) texts [...] These 'power/knowledge' systems of hegemony would have made it impossible to conceive of any analytical framework whereby Caribbean Creole languages are on a genealogical or structural par with European languages. (DEGRAFF, 2003, p. 391).

Changing analytical lenses to discern racist and hegemonic Creole discourse, therefore, requires a gigantic task of disinvention. It involves clearing the way to see Jamaican Creole, as much as other Creole languages, as part of that human capacity/mechanism of adaptation and creation. It also involves considering “transcultural elements (including) language innovation in the idioms and the subtle syntactic incoherence that translate the aboriginal (Creole) mind [not as] linguistic degenerations, but rather seen as fertilizing seeds” (MEDEIROS-LICHEM, 2004, p. 3).

Likewise, changing lenses brings forth the need to reject and/or clarify universally accepted notions such as decreolization because they are external manifestations of a discursive undercurrent that mostly presents Creole languages as “deformations”, “abnormal transmissions” or “special hybrids of an exceptional genealogy” (DEGRAFF, 2003, p. 392).

## **2.6. Jamaican Creole and Language Policies.**

Obviously, changing lenses for the study and analysis of Jamaican Creole will not automatically wipe out prevailing attitudes among speakers, and others. As part of an individual's appropriation and manifestation of social understanding and awareness, attitudinal behaviour responds to surrounding circumstances, and language perception/conception has much to do with the perceived prestige of a given language. Therefore, it may be useful to consider, for instance, a change in status, from “home language” to official language. Such political move may help eliminate or soften the stringent separation between Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English. It is clear that some issues shall take more time, because changing mentalities is a long process; as seen in the case of Haitian Creole that still has a long way to go until being accepted at the level of French.

Nevertheless, it is a known fact that officialdom brings forth some, albeit forced, recognition for a language. In today's world, an official language is granted certain “rights” over non-official languages; such as being the language of instruction, and governmental proceedings. That was the expressed intention of the document *Language Rights in the Draft*

*Charter of Rights in the Jamaican Constitution: A Proposal*, submitted to the consideration of a Parliamentary Committee on May 21, 2001. The document included data showing the extensive use of Jamaican Creole and the need to use it as a language of instruction, on account of being the language in which most Jamaicans think and process information.

The concerns substantiating the advocacy promoted in the *Proposal* resonated in the publication of the Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture Language Education Policy (henceforward, Ministry of Education, for short), in November 2001. Alluding to the reported learning deficiencies among students, the MOE stated a change in language policy accompanied by an instructional shift.

Although Jamaica is described as a bilingual country with Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC) being the two languages in operation, the fluid nature of language use between these languages, as well as the peculiar nature of the linguistic relationship they share, creates difficulties for the majority of Creole speakers learning English [...] Informed by reviews of research on policy options, and on language and literacy acquisition in second language learning environments, the MOEY&C<sup>50</sup> has adopted a policy position, which recognizes Jamaica as a bilingual country. It retains SJE as the official language and advocates the policy option which promotes oral use of the home language in schools, while facilitating the development of skills in SJE. (MOE, 2001, p. 4).

During the research process followed to prepare this thesis, it was observed that most teachers are, in fact, using Jamaican Creole as an instructional method, based on the notion that their students achieve a better understanding when concepts are explained in Creole, not in Standard Jamaican English. A similar consideration seems to have prompted the Declaration passed by the ICCLR (International Centre for Caribbean Language Research) in Kingston, Jamaica (January 14, 2011) in the form of a *Charter on Language Policy and Language Rights in the Creole-Speaking Caribbean*. After discussing aspects of the living situations of Creole speakers in Caribbean countries, the *Charter* states the need to advocate for their language rights. On the matter of education, Article 24 of the *Charter* states that:

1. Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language communities of the territory where it is provided.
2. Education must help to maintain and develop the languages spoken by the language communities of the territory where it is provided.
3. Initial instruction in one's first language is crucial as it enhances conceptual development, language acquisition and development, learning in general, and education of the child.
4. Education must always be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity and of harmonious relations between different language communities throughout the world.

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<sup>50</sup> At the time, this Ministry was known as the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture.



5. Within the context of the foregoing principles, everyone has the following rights: - to at least initial instruction and literacy in their first language; - to learn the territorial languages of the territory in which he/she resides; - to learn any other language.
6. Education in one's first language should be continued for as long as is practical.

The reference to Creole as the language of instruction could be seen as a formalized rationale of the perceptions reported by the participants during the research process followed in this thesis. The present research participants, all Jamaica-born Spanish teachers, confirmed there is an overwhelming presence of Jamaican Creole in schools compounds and classrooms, which brings about the need to interact with students in Creole, and use the language for instructional purposes. Nonetheless, the participating teachers also expressed their obligation to revert to Standard Jamaican English during the same lesson, in observance of the MOE language policy and also because it is a requirement to conclude secondary education with regional exams<sup>51</sup> which are set in Standard English.

A different language policy approach may also promote a shift in the Spanish Language National Curriculum. As informed by participants and observed in curricular documents reviewed during this cartographic research, there seems to be a disconcerting separation between the contents and didactical methods proposed in the Spanish National Curriculum and the actual teaching practices undertaken during Spanish lessons. The National Curriculum shows no reference to the language situation of Jamaica and, consequently, fails to make provisions for the cases of schools located in rural, deep rural and poor communities, where a considerable majority of students are mostly Creole users and, as reported by some of the participating teachers, show very little or no knowledge of Standard Jamaican English.

## **2.7. Final Remarks on the Language Situation of Jamaica**

The linguistic situation of Jamaica is obviously complex, especially because, as any other language, Jamaican Creole is a phenomenon that transcends visible language forms – phonetic, lexical and grammatical – to include other elements that range from all spatial variations (geographical and social) to subtle discursive forms. The Jamaican Creole phenomenon does involve linguistic as well as sociocultural aspects.

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<sup>51</sup> Many Caribbean countries are partially independent. Jamaica, for instance, despite being independent from Great Britain since 1962, still has a semi-colonial system of government, headed by a Governor General, who represents the Queen as Head of State. Likewise, most Caribbean countries still follow colonial educational patterns, particularly represented through regional exams (CXC, CAPE) that are set in Standard English. Legally, many cases are still resolved at the Privy Council, though there has been a decisive move and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) has been established.

Cartographic observations indicated that there is a remarkable presence of Jamaican Creole in practically all aspects of Jamaica's life. It has been also observed that the language has grown and consolidated in such fashion that it may be safely asserted that it is not a dialectal form of Standard English, but a genuine language. Based on the discussions held during the research process and observations on social use, it may also be stated that the language landscape of Jamaica points towards a status of bilingualism among many Jamaicans. Based on participants' reports and informal discussions, it may also be assumed that there is a considerable number of monolingual speakers, probably on account of a limited access to educational opportunities or spatial seclusion in deep rural areas. Of course, such assumption may offer enough material to carry out a study falling under the scope of a different research.

Cartographic observations in Jamaica lead to assert that Jamaican Creole is far from being "decreolized", in the sense proposed by WHINNON (1968) and HOLM (2000), and followed by other linguists. *Decreolization* is a linguistic invention based on a narrow socio-cultural perspective, which disregards important language development processes such as its origin, growth, consolidation and transformation leading to spatial variation, all related to speakers' surrounding circumstances. Hence, if simply based on external formal aspects (MUFWENE, 2002), the notion implying that a language can revert its growth by losing features is untenable.

On the other hand, it may be stated that the so-called 'Creole culture' is a result of a dialogic cultural contact. Each participatory group provide their own elements, including the linguistic ones, as inputs into the sociocultural, socioeconomic, socio-geographical mixture. Creolization, hence, is a process of cultural adoption, adaptation and transformation which also involves the abandonment or negation of those elements deemed useless for the new circumstances.

Given the position in this thesis of conceding to the use of the term 'Creole' and its derivations, it may be stated that, as a branch of linguistics, Creolistics has the important role of disinventing "language fallacies" around Creole languages. Creolistics needs to become a "socially and scientifically responsible" discipline (DEGRAFF, 2003, p.402), advocating for a change of lenses, by means of presenting broadened studies that include Creole language features as inseparable parts of the ideological, psychological and sociocultural aspects involved in the definitions presented:

Ideologies emerge from a complex existing network of discursive possibilities [and] they often continue to exist well after the conditions of their production have changed. [...] If we develop this more psychological or cultural view of colonialism, then

opposition, struggle or resistance to colonialism has to be fought as much in the cultural or psychological domains as in the material or economic. (PENNYCOOK, 1983, p. 39).

As an essentially human phenomenon, a language can only develop within social contexts. So, Jamaican Creole, as much as any other language, has developed out of the particular dialogic social circumstances of Jamaica, resulting in a language that has been enriched with the multiple contributions of all participating groups in the specific dialogue responding to the particular needs arising in the island. Nonetheless, it may be suitable to bear in mind that, despite its consolidated and extended use, Jamaican Creole continues to be censured by detractors who, unreservedly, manifest their scorn towards the language and its speakers. It remains to be seen how Jamaicans will resolve those issues that happen to be more ideological than purely linguistic. An attitude shift may have an important impact on the educational development of the island, namely by officialising Jamaican Creole as a language of instruction and education, parallel to Standard Jamaican English.

### 3. CHAPTER II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. A CARTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE NARRATIVES AMONGST JAMAICAN CREOLE SPEAKING TEACHERS OF SPANISH.

*Long live the multiple, difficult as it is to raise that cry!*  
(DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 6)

*A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and. . . and. . . and. . ."* (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 25)

#### 3.1. Introductory Remarks

The cartographic<sup>52</sup> approach followed through this qualitative research is based on the theoretical framework proposed in DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987), DELEUZE (1973); PASSOS & KASTRUP (2013), DE OLIVERA (2011); ESTRADA (2012); TEDESCO (2013); ROLNIK (2011), CAQUARD (2011); CAQUARD & CARTWRIGHT (2014). This thesis is, therefore, itself a rhizomatic cartography. This research approach developed on account of a combination of the knowledge carried by each participant and the researcher. Based on such combination, researcher and participants not only profited from new ideas and perspectives, they were also transformed due to this process of knowledge exchange and acquisition. As the process evolved, the researcher grew; which manifested through the types of questions and their formulations during interviews and unstructured conversations. In fact, her initial ideas became more fine-tuned, and observation gradually turned into a more acute process. In her role as a cartographer, no detail was lost: participants' inputs were as important as their surrounding contexts (buildings, dress-code, furniture, the acoustic, and the natural environment, etc.). Anything and everything was deemed relevant and used as a source of information.

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<sup>52</sup> The cartographic approach followed provided elements that transcended ethnographic attempts of observing the Jamaican people and describing their languages and their stands in that regard. There was, indeed, an ethnographic move into the field in the sense that the study looked at the language landscape and delved into the depth of Jamaican society through the eyes of Jamaicans who experience such language panorama on a daily basis, hence providing ethnographic infield observations about self-representations of the participating Jamaican Spanish teachers and other, direct and indirect, participants. However, the study went beyond a description of such language situation and the people associated with it by *living* in the field. As explained in this chapter, observations were "anthropophagic" (ROLNIK 1989, p. 65). Therefore, the study fed on any and all elements encountered in the field with the purpose of mapping narratives. That is to say, apart from living in the field in order to observe and describe narratives around the language situation of Jamaica, the cartographic study entailed *activating* a thorough interaction and knowledge exchange, *feeding* from the narratives generated, and *creating* a new narrative.

Based on a cartographic approach, the qualitative research developed among Jamaican Creole users who are currently working as Spanish teachers in the island. Field work then pursued the overarching goal of exploring a) Spanish teachers' narratives about the language situation of Jamaica and its relation with the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language; b) the manner in which their conceptualizations of their own teaching practices relate to the perceived language situation and the curricular guidelines; c) the participating teacher's positions in respect to their status as Jamaican Creole users within an educational context that enforces the use of Standard Jamaican English as the language of instruction; and d) the most relevant aspects concerning the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language within the Jamaican context from the participants perspective.

Little was formally or explicitly anticipated before entering the research field. However, the researcher's previous teaching experience in Jamaica indicated that said field would be rich and complex; which played a role in the interviews and analytical process. Therefore, the researcher's previous teaching experience in Jamaica was seen as a positive fact in the sense that it helped charting the movement into and through the field, while also contributing to enrich the ensuing discussions and foster a more effective co-participation in knowledge creation between the researcher and the participants. Previous knowledge about the Jamaican language situation carried into the field also fostered a more effective knowledge-sharing process; thus facilitating an enhanced understanding of the matters discussed. Obviously, the encounter of subjectivities played a role; not only because there was a rich diversity, but also because they allowed enhancing the information being created and shared; hence motivating a rich process of reflexivity:

Reflexivity reminds the qualitative inquirer to observe herself or himself so as to be attentive to and conscious of the cultural, political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins of her or his own perspective and voice as well as –and often in contrast to– the perspectives and voices of those she or he observes and talks to during fieldwork. Reflexivity calls for self-reflection, indeed, critical self-reflection, and self-knowledge, and a willingness to consider how who one is affects what one is able to observe, hear, and understand in the field and as an observer and analyst. The observer, therefore, during fieldwork, must observe self as well as others, and interactions of self with others. (PATTON, 2002, p. 299)

By combining principles of ethnographic and socio-historical analyses, the cartographic approach followed led to the achievement of the overarching goal; to a considerable extent lessening probable analytical limitations, and allowing an observation of the Jamaica context with the keen eye of the cartographer. Such approach allowed discerning the specificities of a

context rich in socio-psychological contradictions, in their relation with the socio-historical aspects that characterize language use in Jamaica.

### **3.2. A Cartographic approach. Theoretical Considerations.**

Based on the theoretical framework provided by DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987), the cartographic research approach afforded the instruments for a keen observation of social phenomena; taking into account the relevance of multiplicities around them. Because of the determining role assigned to subjectivity, rather than proposing a final product (map) to represent the phenomenon researched, or abstract formulas and rules to be applied, the researcher opted for entering the field and moving along the phenomenon being studied, attempting an interpretation of the most salient and/or characteristic aspects in regards to the prevailing language perceptions and conceptions amongst Spanish teachers, who are also Jamaican Creole users.

Based on the eminently interpretive nature of the cartographic approach, the process involved observations/discussions in the research field, with the purpose of getting a closer feel of the phenomenon. Such approach prevented a beforehand definition of a specific and rigid research line. There was, indeed, an overarching goal waiting in the horizon; as the researcher expected to acquire knowledge about how the participating Spanish teachers perceive the language situation in which they are operating and how such situation impacts their teaching practices; but there was no pre-determined roadmap to achieve said final goal. Therefore, interviews started from semi-structured questions, but they took diverse turns; which made the process multiple and rich.

Following the principles of a cartographic research, no specific outcomes were anticipated; they unveiled along the way. That is to say, even though the research had been motivated by some punctual matters which helped shape the overall goal, knowledge was derived from the actual observation, description and interpretation of what was observed at the field.

### **3.3. A Cartographic/rhizomatic research approach: What and Why?**

Cartography is an analytical approach that departs from the notion that there is a knowledge community in the field; which is to be explored and shared, in order to create new knowledge, as a representative map based on the researcher's interpretation. The rhizomatic perspective supplies an epistemological option to guide the analysis, leading to the notion that, the knowledge process generated, like a rhizome, is constantly renewed and transformed. Such new knowledge is above all, a kind of knowledge that does not result from an imitation or

“mimicry” of the sources. On the contrary, it is generated in the field and allows creating a map representing the interpreted findings. In cartography, as in a rhizome,

There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying [...] Mimicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 10).

Hence, from a cartographic/ rhizomatic point of view, knowledge creation is always an innovative process, in the same manner that a rhizome is an ever-evolving and ever-becoming process. The study of Jamaican Creole users’ narratives carried out through this research, for instance, has offered material to create a map from the perspective of the psycho-ideological positions of the participating Spanish teachers and the researcher. Such map is an interpretation/representation of the situation; with a new character; particularly because, on entering the research field, the researcher/cartographer was bearing in mind that:

❖ There is a *multiplicity* of points of views, narratives and discourses that are to be interpreted. The purpose is to interpret such multiplicity of views, perhaps contrast, compare and, even, problematize them; but not *resolve* them;

❖ Based on the ensuing *interpretation*, the cartographer creates a map that includes everything that has been observed/interpreted. However, it is suitable to remember that, such map is merely a representation of the researchers’ interpretation of what was observed at that particular time and space; it is not a permanent creation. The map created by the cartographer, including the observations and interpretations at and of the field, will be open to constant revision and transformation, because nature has a “multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification” that is always in motion (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1978, p.5).

The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 12).

❖ *Subjectivity* is a determining factor. It involves the subjectivities encountered on the field, as well as that of the researcher’s. Hence, interpretation is always subjective. The lenses carried by the researcher will impact the reading and understanding of the context and, conversely, the lenses carried by the participants will determine the content of their reports.

❖ Interpretation is not conclusive; it is a *plateau* “always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end” (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p.22). Interpretation is based on what the cartographer can “see”, but knowing that there is a multiplicity of multiplicities in time and space; hence the futility of presenting conclusive statements. Knowledge is a process; not a product.

The purpose of the cartographic approach, as combined with a rhizomatic epistemological perspective, was to explore the particular field relating to the personal and shared narratives of Jamaican Creole-Speaking Spanish teachers. The approach, therefore, proved useful because it afforded space for a research that acknowledges the existence of a multiplicity of multiplicities amongst Jamaicans and Jamaican Creole users, and that the matter of Jamaican Creole is surrounded by multiple views, including those of Jamaicans as well as foreigners.

The cartographic approach provided another perspective to analyse the multiplicity of views amongst Jamaican Creole users concerning their own language situation. That is to say, a perspective that relies on instruments that apply beyond the precepts of traditional linguistic views, including those that: (a) analyse language notions as a tree-like binary<sup>53</sup> or genealogical language development patterns; (b) imply it is possible to grasp a phenomenon such as language, name it, write down its description, and expect such description to become the pattern against which language use is to be measured; (c) establish canons that aim at determining what a language is, who a native speaker is, and who is not; (d) disregard the issue of subjectivity when naming, describing and characterising a language.

Resorting to a cartographic/rhizomatic approach allowed the researcher to separate herself from the precepts and notions mentioned above; understanding language development as a multiple and constant rhizomatic growth; whose description is merely an intermediary stage or “plateau”, given that speakers’ use will trigger the continuous growth of such language, and such constantly emerging use will make the language “erupt” (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 199) even before its speakers can actually perceive it. The cartographic/rhizomatic approach provided analytical and epistemological tools to see language as a multiple, malleable, and fluid phenomenon that can only be partially described because its multiplicity

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<sup>53</sup> “This [the rhizome] is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order. The linguistic tree on the Chomsky model still begins at a point S and proceeds by dichotomy. On the contrary, not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.)” (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987:7)



and changeability do not allow a firm hold nor a definite representation of the entire phenomenon.

There are outbursts and crackings in the immanence of a rhizome, rather than great movements and breaks determined by the transcendence of a tree. The crack-up happens almost without your knowing it but is realized suddenly indeed [...] This molecular line, more supple but no less disquieting, in fact, much more disquieting, is not simply internal or personal: it also brings everything into play, but on a different scale and in different forms, with segmentations of a different nature, rhizomatic instead of arborescent. A micropolitics. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 199).

The assertion above may be applied to language development. If seen as rhizomes, it may be affirmed that languages tend to change before perceptible changes are noticed and/or documented. Languages change every day, through “outbursts and crackings” in the form of radicles that grow chaotically “underground”. They are not ramifications of language trees; they are *micro-languages* that have rhizomatically evolved in different spaces and for multiple circumstances; just like micropolitics. Intangible, yet so real.

At the centre of the cartographic approach is the rhizome: the engine of development, the great equalizer of multiplicities; the process that engenders all processes, for it has no end or perceivable beginning: it is always *becoming*.

The multiple must be made, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest of ways, by dint of sobriety, with the number of dimensions one already has available— always  $n - 1$  (the only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted). Subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at  $n - 1$  dimensions. A system of this kind could be called a rhizome. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 6).

The notion of multiplicity, hence, is not the addition of higher dimensions; but the subtraction of  $(-1)$  from the existing dimensions. A rhizome, hence, grows out of the existing multiplicity to form another multiplicity, which will erupt into new rhizomes, and so on. This notion of multiple, multilateral and constant development is essentially different from the dialectical notion that views development as an upward spiral and dichotomy/contrastive development. The rhizome develops essentially through an ensemble of open multilateral and multispatial multiplicities.

According to DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987), the rhizome is based on principles such as (1-2) “Connection and Heterogeneity”, (3) “Multiplicity”, (4) Signifying Rupture, (5) Cartography and Decalcomania<sup>54</sup>. Principles 1 and 2 (Connection and Heterogeneity) imply

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<sup>54</sup> See discussion at length in DELEUZE & GUTTARI, 1987, p. 7-12)

that a rhizome is always connected to a source but it is heterogeneous at the same time (“any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (p7), but not as a root “which plots a point, fixes an order” (p. 7). The rhizome, therefore, should not be seen as a continuation of its source, but as a new creation. These principles apply to the growth of Jamaican Creole, and substantiates the position followed through this thesis claiming that the language is a new rhizome (see discussion in Chapter I) that is connected to its source or sources, but it should not be seen as a homogeneous continuation of such source or sources. On the contrary, it has engendered its own “semiotic chain” (P. 7):

A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1978, p. 7-8).

Therefore, this phenomenon that, but for the sake of this academic exercise, has been termed Jamaican Creole, may be regarded as a rhizome that, though connected to multiple sources, is heterogeneous and multiple at the same time.

Principle 3 (Multiplicity) also applies when looking at language growth from a rhizomatic perspective, as it proposes the notion of multiplicity as a premise to understand growth as a chaotic process in which the only equalizer is its multiplicity, given that there are “no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines” OP. CIT., p. 8). As a rhizomatic multiplicity, Jamaica Creole has also become a multiplicity that exposes “arborescent pseudomultiplicities” (p. 8). Therefore it has become a new phenomenon, palpable<sup>55</sup> but impossible to “overcode” (p. 8), i.e., to be linguistically encased, because its multiplicity is endless and because “a language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence” (p.8).

Principle 4 (Signifying Rupture) also applies to the growth of Jamaican Creole. The line of thought followed in this thesis defends the notion that Jamaican Creole is a new language because it has broken away from the “oversignifying” sources attributed to its origin, either by starting from “old lines” or moving through “new lines”. The rupture of Jamaican Creole is signifying because it has become a palpable rhizome, not as “imitation or resemblance” but as a “heterogeneous series” of a rhizome “that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying” (p. 10).

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<sup>55</sup> Bearing in mind that “multiplicities are defined by the outside (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1978, p.9), which explain the author’s idea that Jamaican Creole is a palpable and observable phenomenon.

Principle 5 (Cartography and Decalcomania) relates to the “anti-structure” and “anti-generative” nature of a rhizome.

The rhizome is altogether different, a *map and not a tracing*. [...]What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation

Cartography, hence, means mapping (not tracing a decal) of phenomena. It means bearing in mind the rhizomatic character of development, which brings forth the endless changing nature of socio cultural phenomena like language, offering a methodological principle for “meditation”, ergo analysing, interpreting and constructing knowledge.

Therefore, development is seen as a process that connects heterogeneous aspects. In social groupings, for instance, “social classes” are to be seen as “masses”; given that not all “have the same kind of movement, distribution, or objectives [nor] wage the same kind of struggle” (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p.214). Thus, social classes are not to be regarded as the unity of similar parts<sup>56</sup>; on the contrary, there is multiplicity within the multiplicity, as the masses are “constantly flowing or leaking from classes”. The analogy of the flowing and leaking in social groupings may be extended to language development. Rather than one homogeneous core language (as described by traditional linguistics), there is a multiplicity of forms and varieties that are constantly leaking, flowing and erupting from the “core” language. Eruption in the rhizomatic perspective is seen as the shattering of the rhizome “at a given spot” only to “start up again on one of its old lines”, which makes development chaotic.

The world has lost its pivot; the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or over-determination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 6).

In the rhizomatic perspective chaos is not seen as destruction or loss, but as a driver of development and as the eruption of fresh rhizomes. Hence, when studying societal development, a cartographer may create a map of what is perceived at a point in time. It is not

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<sup>56</sup> “Social classes themselves imply “masses” that do not have the same kind of movement, distribution, or objectives and do not wage the same kind of struggle. Attempts to distinguish mass from class effectively tend toward this limit: the notion of mass is a molecular notion operating according to a type of segmentation irreducible to the molar segmentarity of class. Yet classes are indeed fashioned from masses; they crystallize them. And masses are constantly flowing or leaking from classes. Their reciprocal presupposition, however, does not preclude a difference in viewpoint, nature, scale, and function (DELEUZE & GUTTARI, 1987, p. 214).

as a mimicking decal; but a map that will constantly change and be transformed. A book may be written, mapping the characteristics and events of a particular social grouping/mass at a particular time/era, but development will not stop there. According to DELEUZE & GUATTARI, (1987, p. 6),

The world has become chaos, but the book remains the image of the world: radicle-chaosmos rather than root-cosmos. A strange mystification: a book all the more total for being fragmented. At any rate, what a vapid idea, the book as the image of the world.

Such notion proves valid for language studies. It may be argued that linguists map/invent languages by describing what they perceive in that regard; but language development is multiple, multidirectional, constant, ergo, rhizomatic. In contact situations, like Caribbean societies, it may be safe to say that it is the chaotic encounter of multiple and heterogeneous forms that give way to language rhizomes. They may be mapped at a point in time, but such mapping is an image or temporary representation of those languages.

Even when linguistics claims to confine itself to what is explicit and to make no presuppositions about language, it is still in the sphere of a discourse implying particular modes of assemblage and types of social power. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 9).

The cartographic approach, hence, views language maps as reflections of discursive practices that portray the subjectivities or lenses linguists carry into the field, and which materialize through language naming and description. “The naming performatively called the languages into being” (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p. 10).

If we can allow for ‘multiple, heterogeneous and uneven temporalities and histories that the dominant historical narrative, often presenting itself as singular and linear, suppresses’ [...] it becomes possible conceptually to question the linearity at the heart of much historical linguistics and to see that time, like language, presents far more diverse ways of thinking about overlapping, translingual language uses. (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p. 28).

Furthermore, the cartographic approach, particularly because of its rhizomatic analytical perspective, opens space for a different understanding on language as an all-encompassing phenomenon in which any and every element matters. If applied to Jamaican Creole, in particular, the cartographer may perceive how the radicles and bulbs (language varieties) have erupted in towns, parishes and municipalities, and how socio-geographical and socioeconomic mobility have triggered such eruptions. Nonetheless, based on the principle of

*multiple subjectivities*, this research entered the field with no preconceived expectation as to the grasping by participants of such mode of language development. In fact, it was observed that most participants follow traditional language views relating to mother tongue, official language, and the definition of Jamaican Creole (as being itself a *language* or not).

Aside from the asserted above, there are other reasons why a rhizomatic approach proves useful to analyse Jamaican Creole as a language phenomenon. A closer look into the Jamaican society and their language situation may allow observing/interpreting some of the characteristics of the rhizome, as presented in DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987, p. 21)<sup>57</sup>:

a) *Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states.*

There is an advantage in an analytical perspective that sees Jamaican Creole as a rhizome, because it allows to see the language as a growing radicle that has a different *nature*. There are undeniable links between Jamaican Creole and the languages spoken by the multiple groups that participated in the creation of the colonial language map under those particular circumstances. Colonial life and the assemblage of multiple languages was a point of departure; but the Creole rhizome(s) growing out of such life and assemblage should be regarded as a new phenomenon, with “different regimes of signs”. Such view allows to see Creole as a genuine and original language phenomenon; thus trashing the notions of “corruption” and “decreolization”.

b) *It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion.*

Jamaican Creole is not a homogeneous phenomenon. It is a process in constant motion, perpetually growing into varieties that also continue to grow, and that are perceivable as the observer moves along the island space. The Jamaican Creole map has been created, transformed, and renovated as the language evolves. So, the map created by CASSIDY (1961) differs from those shown in DECAMP (1968), in LALLA & D’COSTA (1990), in POLLARD (1994), in MÜHLEISEN (2002), in PATRICK (2002, 2003), in POLLARD (2003), in BRATHWAITE (2005) and in DURELAM (2008), among others. Each study shows specific dimensions, as perceived by those scholars at a particular time and space.

c) *It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills.*

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<sup>57</sup> All the points mentioned below in italics are direct quotations from Deleuze & Guattari’s work as referenced here.

If seen as a rhizome, Jamaican Creole is a language in constant growth and change, with new radicles growing as society evolves. This perspective allows to see the language as an evolutionary process that cannot be reversed because every rhizome conforms a new phenomenon having its own new nature. From such analytical angle, it may be safe to assert that the rhizomatic development disallows the notion that Jamaica Creole is being “decreolised”.

d) *It constitutes linear multiplicities with  $n$  dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is always subtracted ( $n - 1$ ). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis.*

Jamaican Creole involves a phenomenon of linear multiplicities but, at the same time, its uniqueness allows to grasp how it has subtracted from the multiplicity of languages from which it erupted, undergoing the metamorphosis that took it to the language forms perceived nowadays.

e) *The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots.*

Jamaican Creole involves multiple language varieties. Linguists have identified and mapped some of those regional varieties, but speakers’ creativity in adopting, adapting and/or adjusting the language is always greater than the description an individual can produce; let alone the fact that such description will be marked by the subjectivity of such individuals. Social, economic, political, cultural, religious and psychological events are constantly happening in Jamaica. There is a whole macrocosm of radicles in the Jamaican society. What an individual can actually grasp is merely a fraction of that overwhelming reality. It was such understanding that swerved the goal of this research towards perceptions, in the hope of creating a Jamaican Creole map that would represent the notions and perceptions of Jamaican Creole users; being aware, nonetheless, that “perception always goes hand in hand with semiotics, practice, politics, theory” (DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987, p.202). Hence, the perceptions unveiled in this study are only a portion of what may be found in the Jamaican context, aside from the fact that they are changing as the participants change their contextual realities; thus “the map created is “detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable”; not permanent.

f) *In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states.*

If seen as a rhizome, Jamaican Creole is the linguistic product of social use in Jamaica, amongst speakers who develop their daily lives expressing their thoughts and ideas, communicating among themselves, and triggering language changes on account of such use. That is to say, language use is determined by speakers' regular use and not by the "General" or authority that proposes and attempts imposing or regulating language forms. In regards to language use, the ultimate concerns of Jamaican speakers is getting by with their lives, understanding and being understood; not the policies and regulations imposed from *above*. The reason for such impervious role of language lies in its "acentred" and "non-hierarchical" rhizomatic character; which is why, as observed in the field, despite the policies and regulations of the Ministry of Education, in many classroom practices, Jamaican Creole is the language of choice; being the language in which many learners think and feel, who see the officially imposed Standard Jamaican English more like a foreign language.

### **3.4. A Cartography with a Socio-Historical Perspective.**

There is a socio-historical angle pertaining to Jamaican Creole that needs to be explored. However, the notion defended through this thesis, is that the historical notion of Jamaican Creole (and other Creole languages) may show a different perspective if seen through lenses different from those traditionally worn when studying the socio-historical aspects concerning the Creole speakers and their languages. New lenses may perceive the intricacies of the Creole phenomenon and distinguish sharp differences between what has been *written* and what is actually happening in the field; thus creating maps that may offer more reliable, albeit subjective, representations.

The difference between macrohistory and microhistory has nothing to do with the length of the durations envisioned, long or short, but rather concerns distinct systems of reference, depending on whether it is an overcoded segmented line that is under consideration or the mutant quantum flow. The rigid system does not bring the other system to a halt: the flow continues beneath the line, forever mutant, while the line totalizes. Mass and class do not have the same contours or the same dynamic, even though the same group can be assigned both signs. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1978, p. 221)

The headline on this section makes reference to the relevance of society in history creation. The assertion above refers to the difference that exists between traditional "official" history (macrohistory) and the multiple, multi-spatial and non-linear histories that constantly obtain as a "quantum flow". Official histories are written in "official languages", as reflections of "points of view of unitary states" (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1978, p.24), but on the field, the cartographer may encounter multiple histories that conform what the authors refer to as a

“nomadology” narrative, that is, the fact that different and untold histories enclose different narratives, perhaps divergent from the “overcoded” official historical line, on account of their “distinct systems of reference”. In their words:

History is always written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history of hips, line of flight [...] Make maps, not photos or drawings. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1978, p. 24-25).

Considering that this cartographic research had the aim of making a perceptual map about those “nomadic” language perspectives, the socio-historical perspective embraced proved quite valuable because it allowed unveiling interaction patterns and organizational modes at a societal level that contributed to the creation of a map about the growth and consolidation of Jamaican Creole sociolinguistic aspects; as well as individual and shared criteria about the language. According to FREITAS (2003, p.5),

[The] socio-historical approach when understanding that the psyche is constituted in the social in an interactive process made possible by language, can permit the development of methodological alternatives that overcome the dichotomies objective/ subjective, external/internal, social/ individual.

Consequently, the rhizomatic socio-historical perspective provided an angle for a broader knowledge and understanding of the individual as a *nomad*. It also allowed observing/interpreting shared beliefs and perceptions about the Jamaican Creole phenomenon amongst speakers, and the manner in which such perceptions and beliefs materialize in their Spanish teaching practices.

[The] the socio-historical perspective may represent a significant way for a different way of producing knowledge in the human sciences field. [That] theoretical perspective brings implications that reflect in the procedural and ethical characteristics of doing research in human sciences demanding coherence from the researcher in the conception and use of methodological instruments for the collection and analysis as well as in the construction of texts based on the discussions of the findings. (FREITAS, 2003, p. 5).

Indeed, the qualitative research developed among Spanish teachers who are Jamaican Creole users combined a cartographic methodological approach with a rhizomatic socio-historical perspective; thus allowing the creation of a map about the participants’ language conceptions, perceptions and narratives in their relation with their Spanish teaching practices and methodological choices. The qualitative research method held on to the participatory-transformative principles of the cartographic approach, providing clarity in connection to the



relevance of subjectivities and reflexivity in the process of mutual knowledge creation. The rhizomatic perspective, nonetheless, fuelled awareness in regards to the changing nature of social contexts, given that “just as physical environments vary, so too do social environments. The ways in which human beings interact create social-ecological constellations that affect how participants behave toward each other in those environments” (PATTON, 2002, p. 283).

The reference to "socio-ecological constellations" above does fall on the ground of the rhizomatic perspective to which this cartographic research adheres; since it aims at understanding the constant variation that happens within the social environment, the people and their linguistic realities. Therefore, based on the understanding that Jamaican Creole, as any other language, is not a final and definitive linguistic product, the research focused on Jamaicans' perceptions about the Jamaican Creole as a language of dynamic use and as a means of communication through which they express their beliefs, perceptions and ideas; given its character of "semiotic chain that gathers several events; not only linguistic, but perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive "(DELEUZE & GUATTARI ,1987, p.8).

In describing the social environment, the observer looks for the ways in which people organize themselves into groups and subgroups. Patterns and frequency of interactions, the direction of communication patterns [...], and changes in these patterns tell us things about the social environment. (PATTON, 2002, p. 283).

Therefore, the cartographic approach led to an inclusive socio-historical perspective, which created space for different nomadic discourses around Jamaican Creole. Each participant, including the researcher, was regarded as a socio-historically positioned individual. Hence, though interpreted as individual reports, perceptions were also compared, contrasted and, whenever possible, generalized as expressions of a group conformed by Jamaican Spanish teachers.

### **3.5. Narrative as a Research Tool**

Narrative may be seen from different standpoints. Many view narrative as a process of literary creation, particularly in fictional tales that may take the form of short stories and novels, for instance. But narrative may be approached from a different perspective when used as a “cognitive method” (HYVARINEN (2008, p. 262), or a research tool that allows to “meaningfully capture the shifting contours of lived experience” (ADLER, (2008, p. 423), considering that, generally, as humans “we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative” (BRUNER, 1991, p. 4). Hence, narrative may be

seen as a non-fictional unveiling of life metaphors about individual experiences that may provide valuable “population trends” (ADLER, 2008, p.423), nonetheless,

No matter how robust a scientific finding about a given group, there will be people in that group whose personal narratives do not embrace the trend. In fact, for individuals who feel their own personal stories diverge from dominant cultural narratives, it is especially important for them to develop a coherent narrative about that difference in order to maintain their psychological equilibrium. Such discrepancies do not render the scientific findings less valid, nor do they diminish the value of the narratives (ADLER, 2008, p. 424).

Therefore, in this research, interviews were interpreted as “accounts of human progress, perfectibility, decline and loss within a framework of culture and worldview” (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 2007, p.15), and the data generated were seen as pieces of a major language “discourse” (HYVARINEN, 2006, p.34), materialized through the positioning of each participant, based on their personal knowledge about the situation of Jamaican Creole, and filtered through the knowledge and the personal narrative of the researcher’s. Consequently, the narratives unfolded during the interviews were regarded as pieces of a “flexible interpretive process”(HYVARINEN, 2008, p. 267) of knowledge creation, whereby both, the researcher’s interpretation of the information being communicated, as well as the participants’ own interpretation of what was being discussed, played a part, since both were impacted by the “background knowledge of both the storyteller and the listener [and the manner in which they would] interpret the background knowledge of the other” (BRUNER, 1991, p. 10).

Furthermore, the data generated during the research process, involving the said as well as the unsaid (body language, surrounding environment, media publications, social network discussions, etc.) were seen as reflections of the participants’ narratives that transcended the personal to hint at socioideological and sociocultural underlying narratives, as interpreted by the researcher. Such perception on the researcher’s part was based on the approach of narrative as a “phenomenon and method” (CONNELLY & CLANDININ, 1990, p.2) at the same time. This is also the view brought forward in WEBSTER & MERTOVA (2007, p.3):

Narrative studies problems as forms of storytelling involving characters with both personal and social stories. It contributes to research on teaching and learning through its ability to frame the study of human experience. Narrative can tap the social context or culture in which teaching and learning takes place. Just as a story unfolds the complexities of characters, relationships and settings, so can narrative illuminate complex problems in teaching and learning.

That is, narrative was used here as a research tool for producing data as presented through personal narratives in interviews but, at the same time, the researcher was looking at

the entire narrative landscape developing within the Jamaican language context. Personal narratives, therefore, showed priceless lines of personal information that, as they were put into context, allowed for more substantial interpretations in regards to the situation of the participating group, the issues pertaining to the teaching of Spanish in Jamaica, as well as general attitudinal matters of the Jamaican society.

In the context of research, what makes them noteworthy is their educational value. Unlike many of the stories we meet elsewhere, those we read and hear in the teaching and learning context are usually intended to help us learn – either directly about the subject matter of instruction or, alternatively, about the strengths or shortcomings of the teaching itself. This fundamental link of narrative with teaching and learning as human activities directly points to its value as an educational research tool. (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 2007, p. 15).

In this regard, this cartographic research has provided knowledge concerning the conceptions and perceptions of the participating Jamaican Creole speaking Spanish teachers. Such perceptions and conceptions have been interpreted as the production and exchange of narratives, not as fictional recounts of the participants' lives, but as their metaphoric expressions. Participants' personal narratives and stories, as well as the manner and the context in which they were presented, were seen as metaphorical resources that allowed "observing something else" (HYVARINEN, 2006, p.31) beyond the personal interview or conversation itself. It may be stated that, by looking at the evolution and resulting product of the research process as a narrative of narratives, it was possible to detect metaphors of life emerging from the participants' perceptions and conceptions, while also achieving knowledge about how participants "make sense of their lives according to the narratives available to them" (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 2007, p.1), considering that usually people "dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative (HYVÄRINEN, 2006, p. 23).

Further to that, it may be suitable to say that people create narratives through their actions, thoughts, and desires. Therefore, the use of narrative as a research tool helped bringing forth the possibility of seeing life as a collage of multiple narratives, that intermingle or separate from each other, particularly if understanding the notion that "time may be circular, memory works backwards, and the events of a story may potentially lead in many directions" (HYVÄRINEN, 2006, p.29). Overall, the narratives unveiled have contributed to create a narrative landscape that allows understanding the cultural group involved in the research; or if understanding it from the perspective proposed in BRUNNER (1990), a plunge into "cultural psychology".

“A *cultural* psychology and how it must venture beyond conventional aims of positivist science with its ideals of *reductionism*, *causal explanation* and *prediction*....when we deal with meaning and culture, we inevitably move toward another ideal [...] trying to understand how human beings interpret their worlds and how *we* interpret *their* acts of interpretation. (BRUNER, 1990, p. 1).

The notion of narrative worked in tandem with the cartographic approach followed by the researcher because it allowed a more thorough consideration of the life aspects that surround the Creole-speaking Spanish teachers who participated in this research. This notion of narrative also contributed to the interest of reducing or, better yet, eliminating any “absurdly reductionist equation [at times associated] with field work, participant observation, narrative description, or even more simplistically with interview” (HORNBERGER, 2009, p.355). Seen from such broader perspective, it may be stated that narrative resulted a valuable tool for gathering information about language perceptions and conceptions, as well as the manifestation of prevailing language ideologies framed within the multiplicity of participants’ beliefs and attitudes. Narrative as a research tool, hence, allowed examining and uncovering a wide range of notions, all of which brought forth multiple possibilities of understanding the language context of Jamaica, while also providing a valuable opportunity for dissecting such situation, considering it as part of the bigger narrative conformed by Jamaican Spanish teachers, including both the participants and the researcher.

The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general concept is refined into the view that education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories. (CONNELLY & CLANDININ, 1990, p. 2).

It is precisely such principle that has guided the researcher towards and through the multiple narratives about Spanish teaching in Jamaica, considering that such narratives grow out of the specific contextual reality of the island. Considering the character of narrative as “both phenomenon and method” (CONNELLY & CLANDININ, 1990, p.2), the narrative perspective allowed valuable interactions between the participants and the researcher, providing a combination of individual worldviews and notions, while also producing a remarkably “rich framework [to] investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 2007, p.3).

The central value of narrative inquiry is its quality as subject matter. Narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways. (CONNELLY & CLANDININ: 1990, p. 10).

However, the usefulness of narrative expands beyond such informative and perceivable individual worldviews (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 1997, p.6)<sup>58</sup>. It may be proposed that by adhering to the narrative inquiry as a tool to study the language conceptions and perceptions of Jamaican Spanish teachers, it was also possible to access and share information about specific aspects of the Jamaican “cultural psychology” (BRUNER, 1990, p.1). Such perception on the part of the researcher allowed observing the way in which participants “deal with meaning and culture” (BRUNER, 1990, p.1) in its connection with Jamaican spoken language and the methodological tools to teach Spanish in the midst of that Jamaican particular language landscape. The use of narrative as a research tool also provided material for the researcher to ascertain the multiple range of notions relating to the way in which those Creole speaking participants view their language situation and how such situation influences their teaching of Spanish, and how the meaning grasped in the process “is rendered *public* and *shared*” (BRUNER, 1990, p.13). Therefore, the research moment helped observing how mingled and shared narratives meaningful to the participants and the researcher were filtered through statements manifested through interviews and conversations; allowing “to understand how [those] human beings interpret their worlds and how *we* [the researcher included] interpret *their* acts of interpretation” (BRUNER, 1990, p.1)<sup>59</sup>.

The use of narrative as a research tool also contributed to the perceptual map resulting from the entire research. The exchange between the participating teachers and the researcher brought about a product based on the combination of worldviews, perceptions and conceptions of persons who, for being all involved in the teaching of Spanish in Jamaica, have mutually created a narrative that may be seen as a manifestation of what the researcher may term as a Spanish teacher’s “folk psychology” (BRUNER, 1990, p.14) in Jamaica, pertaining to that professional field and involving their hopes, dreams, fears, as well as their perceptions and conceptions on Jamaican Creole:

“Folk psychology” is a culture’s account of what makes human beings tick. It includes a theory of mind, one’s own and others’, a theory of motivation, and the rest. ... [It] does not get displaced by scientific paradigms. For it deals with the nature, causes, and consequences of those intentional states – beliefs, desires, intentions, commitments- that most scientific psychology dismisses in its effort to explain human

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<sup>58</sup> “Worldview according to Henson (1992) is the perception of reality based on central assumptions, concepts and premises shared by members of a culture or subculture. Worldviews are encompassed in the stories that are told. Stories are one mechanism of revealing those views in the context of educational research” (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 1997, p.6)

<sup>59</sup> The author’s emphasis.

action from a point of view that is outside human subjectivity. (BRUNER, 1990, p. 13-14).

The narrative of Jamaican Creole speaking Spanish teachers was situated in the Jamaican cultural context, seen as a collective creation that is shared amongst them, but also including the researcher's, who happens to share the same academic and professional interests.

If narrative is fundamental to communication, then the use of narrative as a research method may, for instance, give us a better understanding of teaching, learning and performance in a wide range of environments and may assist in generating more appropriate teaching tools and techniques. Further, narrative has implications for our view of the learner. A concern for the narrative brings to the forefront features of the learner's thinking and learning needs that may have been neglected through more traditional research methods. (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 2007, p. 16).

Therefore, the research process showed a combination of individual but shared experiences of a group, which allowed mapping a narrative about personal and shared beliefs, hopes and intentions; which, in turn, has reverted in a collective vision of the situation concerning the teaching of Spanish in the Jamaican context ultimately leading to necessary curricular changes.

To understand man [sic] you must understand how his experiences and his acts are shaped by his intentional states, and the second is that the form of these intentional states is realized only through participation in the symbolic systems of the culture. Indeed, the very shape of our lives – the rough and perpetually changing draft of our autobiography that we carry in our minds – is understandable to ourselves and to others only by virtue of those cultural systems of interpretation. But culture is also constitutive of mind. By virtue of this actualization in culture, meaning achieves a form that is public and communal rather than private and autistic (BRUNER, 1990, p. 33).

Hence, it may be suitable to argue that in the context of Jamaica, amidst the cohort of Spanish teachers, and more specifically among Jamaican Creole speaking teachers of Spanish, it is possible to find narratives evolving out of untold stories. Stories present issues, but when seen under the light of a bigger picture and, in their intermingling with the stories of participants and the researcher herself, help create a narrative about the perceived Creole situation in Jamaica and its implication on the teaching of Spanish in the island.

CONNELLY & CLANDININ (1990, p.2-11) present several ideas regarding the characteristics of narrative inquiry as connected to educational research, which proved valuable for this research as well. According to the authors, narrative may prove a valuable research tool because:

a) It focuses on human experience and, because of its holistic quality, it has an important place in other disciplines, thus being appropriate to many social science fields.

b) It has a collaborative nature, hence all participants see themselves as participants in the community, which has value for both researcher and practitioner, theory and practice

c) Narrative research provides a sense of equality between participants, giving a voice and empowering participants to tell their stories. Furthermore, it facilitates a mutual construction of the research relationship, by virtue of which both practitioners and researchers feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories.

d) The research process becomes one in which the researcher is continually trying to give an account of what HYVÄRINEN (2008, p.262) terms as temporary<sup>60</sup> and interactive multiple levels of the inquiry process. That is, people are both living, experiencing and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others; whereas the researcher is involved in the complexity of narrative leading towards an imagined future, while retelling and attempting to relive the stories discussed. Narrative as a research tool is complex because all participants and the researcher are engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories at the same time.

e) As a tool supporting a research, educational narrative inquiry includes observing everyday actions of teachers, students, administrators, based on a subtle twist of mind on behalf of the enquirer. It is in the tellings and retellings that entanglements become acute, for it is here that temporal and social, cultural horizons are set and reset.

f) Empirical data are central in narrative inquiry. Data derives from field notes, journal records, interview transcripts, observations, story-telling, letter writing, autobiographical writing, documents such as class plans and newsletters, and writing such as rules, principles, pictures, metaphors, and personal philosophies.

Thus, narrative inquiry was used here as a research tool because the researcher found it to be profoundly humanistic and in tandem with a cartographic approach to research. Hence, the research process was enriched by the collaborative moments promoted and enhanced through personal narratives. Furthermore, for being incorporated into the broader scope of a cartographic research, the personal narratives presented during interviews, informal

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<sup>60</sup> As stated in HYVÄRINEN (2008, p.262), "The focal point of the metaphoric discourse was to revolutionize the way human action, identity, and life were understood, and here narrative provided an important combination of temporal change and continuity"

conversations and in-field observations were contextualized based on the notion that every bit of information, from whichever source, mattered. Hence, not only what was said during interviews was deemed as relevant, but all material surrounding; ranging from school compounds and classroom situations to media publications, social network interactions, political speeches, radio programmes, etc. Everything encountered in the field was considered a meaningful piece of the narrative product being created.

The research as a whole is conceived as the development of a narrative (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). It is a jointly developed narrative, with many participants, but told by one narrator who takes responsibility for, and at the same time critiques, the view of intersubjective reality presented at each stage and as a whole. (WEBSTER & MERTOVA, 2007, p. 18).

### **3.6. The Research Process.**

#### **3.6.1. Rationale**

This qualitative research had the overarching objective of *exploring language narratives among Jamaican Creole users who are currently working as Spanish teachers in the island in order to acquire knowledge about the prevailing individual and collective narratives emerging from that group*. Based on the notion that there is a common ground that participants as well as the researcher share in relation to the matter of language teaching/learning in Jamaica, an important assumption was that a collective narrative would reflect the specific sensibilities of language professionals involved in the teaching of a foreign language amid the complex language context of Jamaica. It was anticipated that most participants were aware of the relevance of sharing intercultural understandings in the process of teaching Spanish<sup>61</sup>, seeing their professional endeavour as a priceless moment to foster understanding and acceptance of language differences. Such understanding would be key in generating a different approach to the language issue in the island, leading towards (and fostering) more acceptance towards the use of different languages and seizing the moment for tackling and improving language knowledge, both in the target language (Spanish) and the two prevailing Jamaican languages.

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<sup>61</sup> It may be pertinent to point out here, that there seems to be a lack of awareness in relation to the differences existing in the so-called Spanish language, as it was observed that Spanish is seen as an abstract language body, with a particular grammatical structure, vocabulary and phonetic architecture. The overarching narrative concerning Spanish as a unitary language disregards the existence of language varieties, even in cases where the culture and history of particular Spanish-speaking countries are showcased.



Participant selection was not based on their positioning in regards to the Spanish varieties<sup>62</sup> currently being taught; nor the choices made in regards to such varieties (by themselves or the Ministry of Education<sup>63</sup>). Participants were chosen as they conformed to a “purposeful sampling” (PATTON, 1990)<sup>64</sup> aimed at generating a considerable amount of information concerning participants’ individual and shared narratives as reflected through their perceptions and conceptions of Jamaican Creole. Additionally, keeping in mind the issue of spatial distribution of Jamaican Creole use in the island, the socio-geographical distribution was considered. Therefore, it was preferred to include participants from different regions of Jamaica; which afforded a wider spatial information in regards to participants’ perception, based on their specific geographical and socioeconomic contexts.

The strategy described above also allowed observing the workings of language varieties in those regions; as well as the social perceptions around them, as reported by participants. It was observed that spatial and geographical distributions have a bearing on those teachers’ working conditions, especially in regards to language competence; as shown through their narratives and also observed during interviews (see Chapter III, Section 3.6). Interviews allowed to grasp the value of participants’ narratives as socio-psychological stories relating to family stories, religious beliefs, political and cultural perspectives that make up the Creole phenomenon in Jamaica.

This research was motivated by the author’s findings in previous studies<sup>65</sup> on Jamaican Creole, which generated an interest in delving on Jamaican Creole users’ narratives about their

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<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the alleged lack of awareness in regards to Spanish language varieties is channelled through the perceived fact that most participants are mainly engaged in teaching and producing grammar in a contextual vacuum, in most cases oblivious to the regular use among actual language users. Another contending matter in this regard is the use of the term “Spanish” as a one-size-fits-all name generally accepted among teachers and others, but clearly debatable from the line of thought presented in this thesis. It may be suitable to question whether those languages should continue to be recognised as “Spanish varieties” or perhaps the time has come to swerve such manner of thinking and acknowledge them as authentic languages, finding fresh terms to recognise them. Such matters merit an in-depth study which cannot be accommodated in this research due to time and space, but important questions remain that would need to be answered in the near future (see final remarks in this thesis). A research concerning the languages taught in Jamaica, as well as the narratives around such matter seems like an interesting albeit demanding endeavour.

<sup>63</sup> A review of Spanish Curriculum Documents confirms the use of Spanish language as a generic term, since there is no guidance as to which Spanish variety should be taught. Empirical data points towards a prevalence of Caribbean varieties, particularly Cuban, based on the number of Cuban teachers in the island, but this is a matter that requires further research.

<sup>64</sup> “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling” (PATTON, 1990, p. 169).

<sup>65</sup> SÁNCHEZ, Maria T. *Considerations on the Notion of Decreolization*. 2006, [https://www.academia.edu/20973001/Considerations\\_on\\_the\\_Notion\\_of\\_Decreolization](https://www.academia.edu/20973001/Considerations_on_the_Notion_of_Decreolization) ; SÁNCHEZ, Maria T. *Group Work Strategies in a Jamaican Classroom Setting: What to bear in mind?* [https://www.academia.edu/12812899/Group\\_Work\\_Strategies\\_in\\_a\\_Jamaican\\_Classroom\\_Setting\\_What\\_to\\_bear\\_in\\_mind](https://www.academia.edu/12812899/Group_Work_Strategies_in_a_Jamaican_Classroom_Setting_What_to_bear_in_mind) (last access 15/08/2015);

language situation. However, the matter of narratives being one of such magnitude and amplitude, the author chose to focus specifically on the prevailing narratives among Jamaican Spanish teachers; at the same time expecting to find a correlation between those narratives and Spanish teaching practices and methodological choices, given that previous findings also pointed towards a possible impact of Jamaican Creole<sup>66</sup> on the teaching and learning of Spanish as a foreign language in the island. Hence, the author's previous research background generated doubts that became leading questions for this research:

- ❖ What are the perceptions of the Jamaican teachers of Spanish that speak Jamaican Creole about Jamaican Creole?
- ❖ Is there a relationship between these perceptions and their methodological choices?
- ❖ To what extent, the social, cultural, political and historical factors influence Spanish teachers' perceptions, their being Jamaican Creole users themselves?

Those reflective questions were the foundation for the design of an exploratory questionnaire<sup>67</sup> that was randomly administered among eighty (80) Spanish teachers from different regions in Jamaica. The responses to this exploratory questionnaire helped define participant selection criteria for interviews and brought about reflections that guided the design of open questions for the semi-structured first-round interviews. The analysis of questionnaire responses also provided a notion of the possible, albeit flexible, roadmap and nature of the research, bearing in mind the relevance of mutual subjectivities, as well as multiplicity and heterogeneity (DELEUZE, 1973) as guiding principles, in order to create a map representing the findings.

The diversity of viewpoints observed at the research field was tantamount to the complexity of individuals' multiplicity; which provided a broad picture of the pervading multiplicity of criteria around Jamaican Creole in the Jamaican society; as perceived, understood, constructed and reported by the participating Spanish teachers, all within their own "social contexts" (PATTON, 2003). Doubtlessly, engaging in a **qualitative research** on the participants' narratives around Jamaican Creole, facilitated a deeper knowledge and

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SANCHEZ, M.T. *Discursive Code-Switching: A view from the Northern Caribbean University*  
[https://www.academia.edu/8152266/Discursive\\_Codeswitching](https://www.academia.edu/8152266/Discursive_Codeswitching) 2011.(last access 23/08/2015)

<sup>66</sup> SANCHEZ, et al. *Jamaican Creole: Its Influence on Language Teaching and Learning*.  
[https://www.academia.edu/12798114/Jamaican\\_Creole\\_Its\\_Influence\\_on\\_Language\\_Teaching\\_and\\_Learning](https://www.academia.edu/12798114/Jamaican_Creole_Its_Influence_on_Language_Teaching_and_Learning)  
 (last access 17/08/2015).

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix A

understanding of the phenomenon as a meaningful aspect in the life and actions of the participants, given that:

Qualitative researchers are after meaning. The social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances, and situations, as well as the meanings people embed into texts and other objectives, are the focus of qualitative research. Therefore, at the heart of their work, qualitative researchers try to extract meaning from their data. The focus of research is generally words and texts as opposed to numbers (as is the case in quantitative/statistical research. (NAGY & LEAVY, 2011, p. 4).

An important aspect of the qualitative research is the interpretative approach that leads to distinguish "human actions from the physical objectives because they are based on an inherent way in the construction of meanings" (SCHWANDT, 2000, p. 191). Additionally, Schwandt states that human actions should be understood in terms of those systems of meaning that determine the way in which actions can be categorized and objects can be labelled. Therefore, this qualitative research, supported by a cartographic approach, helped in the consideration of meaning construction processes among Jamaican Creole users who are involved in the teaching of Spanish, concentrating more on the mind processes working through such perceptions than in their results (BOGDAN & BIKLEN, 2003).

Therefore, during the research process a close attention was paid to meaning construction, both from the part of the participants' and of the researcher's, considering its weight on the perceptual process. Interviews indicated how participants perceive/construct the linguistic situation of the island, their notions around Jamaican Creole as a language, and its impact on their teaching practices. Overall, the interview process allowed the researcher not only to enter the field and hold conversations with the participants, but primarily to witness a world of "multiple truths", all "bound by the time, the context, and the individuals who believe them (MORRISON, et al, 2012, p. 27).

The cartographic approach, thus, led to the unveiling of multiple perspectives and a multiplicity of perceptions amongst participants; which combined with the researcher's own "truths" and perceptions, and jointly helped create a new map based on new knowledge.

Aware of the multiplicity of constructions that usually characterize the perceptual process, the researcher opted for instruments fitting to a research approach, which were applied in the particular contexts where participants operate. The cartographic instruments used were mainly aimed at unveiling narratives that would contribute to a better understanding of the participants' language conceptions and perceptions; as well as the way in which socio-historical and sociocultural aspects influence those perceptual narratives and, in the process,

impacting methodological and pedagogical practices in the classroom. The rationale for the research process also rested on the guiding principle of grasping a multiple vision (DELEUZE, 1973) of the participating Jamaican Spanish teachers, following an interpretative and critical perspective, on the grounds that “the social world is constantly being constructed through group interactions, and thus, social reality can be understood via the perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning-making activities” (NAGY & LEAVY, 2011, p. 5).

### 3.6.2. Research Stages

Based on a cartographic approach, this qualitative research involved three main stages for data generation, with the purpose of answering the general research questions in search for the overarching goal of exploring personal and shared narratives among Creole-speaking Spanish teachers.

The research process was regarded as a data generation process. A preferred term to the more usual *data gathering or collecting*, considering that there was neither a rigid research line nor tightly structured interview questions. The data revealed itself as the process evolved. As expressed before, interviews took diverse turns based on the narratives produced by the participants; hence most questions were generated in the field as they derived from the discussion.

Recent studies on cognition from a constructivist perspective, present points of view asserting that there is no such thing as data collection; instead, from inception, there is a production of research data. A paradoxical formulation of “data production” aims at highlighting that there is an actual production beyond of what previously existed in a virtual manner. (PASSOS, et al. 2010, p. 33).

The three main stages of the research process included:

a) An **exploratory** stage including informal preliminary discussions and random questionnaires that were administered among Spanish teachers in Jamaica.

This stage was very important because it offered a view of what could be found at the field. No participant was discriminated at this stage, since the purpose was to create the basis for future interviews with selected participants. Nonetheless, the opinions and ideas of those that were not selected later, for not being within the preferred group outlined in the selection criteria, were useful points in preparation for the semi-structured questions. Many of those that were not selected, do have a vast Spanish teaching experience, and their opinions helped in determining the inroads for discussions in connection with teaching methods and curricular guidelines.

b) **First round** of interviews with specifically chosen participants;

Once participants were selected<sup>68</sup>, the interview process started. This stage involved a lot of traveling, as the intention was to do the interviews within the working context of selected participants, both for them to feel more comfortable and for the researcher to be better acquainted with their working contexts. This was important because, according to PASSOS, et al (2010),

The object is to pay close, variable and immediate attention to the object-process, in the manner of a haptic perception [that involves] exploring the palpable field, in order to construct knowledge about the objects. The haptic perception [...] mobilizes attention and requires a considerable working memory so that, at the end of the exploration, there is a synthesis, which result is a knowledge about the object. (OP. CIT, p. 41).

Hence, a close and immediate observation was as relevant as the responses and reactions generated during the interview process. Anything and everything was considered valuable information; not just the participants' responses and reactions during the interviews. Lead by an anthropophagic<sup>69</sup> intention, the researcher derived information from the entire surrounding environment: the students' general behaviour, the school compound situation, classroom furniture, the presence or not of gardens and their status, the acoustic environment, dress codes, the architecture styles and maintenance condition, and so on. An extremely useful source was body language (the gestures, smiles, laughter, etc.) and pauses, seen as signs of "attitudes" and indications of particular "problems" that needed careful reflection (PASSOS, et al. 2010, p.39).

The first round occupied a substantial amount of the time allotted for the research process because it generated extensive (and intensive) discussions on the matters proposed by the researcher or volunteered by participants. These interviews led to a remarkable knowledge about the prevailing language perceptions and conceptions among participating Creole-speaking Spanish teachers, and prompted the need of more in-depth discussions.

c) **Second Round Interviews** (In-depth un-structured conversations).

Upon conclusion of the First Round of Interviews and data analysis, there were some issues that still seemed problematic and needed additional discussions. Based on that assumption, some of the Spanish teachers were asked if they were willing to have further

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<sup>68</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>69</sup> "The cartographer is a true anthropophagus: he feeds out of expropriating, appropriating. Devouring and spawning, becoming renewed. The cartographer is always looking for elements that would feed and compose his/her cartographies". (ROLNIK 1989, p. 65).

discussions on some of the issues generated during their first interviews. Additionally, participants other than the teachers were added, with the purpose of broadening the knowledge generated. The latter were mostly persons in position of authority (at the Ministry of Education); or that were/are involved in the curriculum design<sup>70</sup>. Some were/are scholars who were/are developing researches on similar topics. An advantage of such selection was that, aside from contributing to enhance knowledge about the research questions, they presented a different perspective which helped triangulate information in order to acquire a wider spectrum in connection with the research topic. At this stage, the methodological tool was not pre-designed. Unstructured conversations became the ideal tool to unveil the remarkable wealth of information produced by the participant's experience on the field, or in the words of JENKINS (2013):

They had all kinds of knowledge and experience that I lacked, and approached them as equals in the context of our conversation. They were therefore welcome to decide what and what not to discuss, to ask as well as answer questions, and to choose when to draw a particular topic or even the entire conversation to a close. This meant that rather than being 'semi-structured in-depth interviews', as is often the case with qualitative research interviews, mine were completely unstructured. I had no formal list of questions to ask the participants, not even a set of topics to cover, merely "some sense of the themes" relating to my research questions. (JENKINS, 2013, p. 160).

The experience exposed in JENKINS (2013) did resonate in this research. It was observed that each discussion would move in specific directions. Each interviewee provided a remarkable wealth of knowledge; which helped diversify and enrich the content of this research.

The instruments mentioned above allowed the passage from a preliminary and exploratory phase that provided general insights as to the *who* and the *where* of the research process, to in-depth semi-structured interviews that triggered the need of adding up by way of in-depth unstructured discussions.

In-depth interviews are purposeful interactions in which an investigator attempts to learn what another person knows about a topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks and feels about it, and what significance or meaning it might have. (MEARS, 2012, p. 170).

### **3.6.3. Research Instruments**

In line with the principles of qualitative research, aiming at discussions and observations, rather than statistical evaluations of the data, the research process mostly relied

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix B

on instruments that would allow the observation and discussion of subjectivities based on a cartographic approach. Hence the use of the following **instruments**:

❖ **Exploratory Questionnaire.** This instrument was applied among Spanish teachers currently working in Jamaica<sup>71</sup> and helped determine the ideal participants for the process. It was not used to quantify responses, or evaluate trends of thought. The questions, mostly open-ended, served to perceive notions that would most adequately lead to achieving the overarching goal. Closed yes/no questions were also used just to determine who was a Jamaican Creole speaker and if included within the age group chosen for the research. These questions also allowed determining the geographical distribution of participants.

❖ **Interviews.** After selecting the ideal participants, the interview process started. It involved open, semi-structured questions aimed at providing knowledge about the prevailing language perceptions and conceptions among participants, and based on the “assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit [hence] we interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories” (PATTON, 2002, p. 341). Indeed, interviews were fruitful exercises by means of which the participants and the researcher shared a substantial amount of information that provided grounds for reasoning toward the overarching goal of acquiring knowledge about the participants' narratives in the form of “view[s of] their world, *their* terminology and judgments, [as well as] the complexities of *their* individual perceptions and experiences.” (PATTON, 2002, p. 348).

Interviews offered valuable information leading towards the overarching goal of exploring language narratives, as well as language perceptions, conceptions, beliefs, and personal positions of participants given their status as Jamaican Creole users and their roles as Spanish teachers. Their contributions also informed feasible strategies for promoting changes

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<sup>71</sup> “Spanish is taught as a Foreign Language in Jamaica in three levels: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. It is not a compulsory subject at the moment but it is generally taught in most schools on the island, especially after the signing of the Chaguaramas Treaty, by means of which Spanish was declared a foreign language in the region. Spanish is taught in private and public schools, but at private schools the subject is advertised as a “catch” to attract resources to keep schools running” (CORBETT-BAUGH, Personal Interview). Currently, Jamaican high school students have the option of doing Spanish Regional Exams like CSEC (Certificate of Secondary Education) and CAPE (Advanced Proficiency Exam), especially those who are willing to pursue studies on foreign language teaching, Humanities or others (see CSEC and CAPE Performance Results from 2008 to 2016 in Annex G). Mrs. Corbett-Baugh's words are reflected in the MOE Modern Foreign Languages Curriculum Standards, where it is stated that:

In keeping with the Ministry of Education's mantra, ‘Every child can Learn and Every Child must Learn’, and Jamaica's Vision 2030 mandate, ‘The educated Jamaican will speak an additional language and have at least the minimum requirement for tertiary education’ (Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan -Popular version page 23), this foreign language curriculum provides every student with the opportunity to develop his/her competence in listening and responding, speaking, reading and responding, and writing. In order to achieve this competence, the Jamaican child ought to be prepared to participate in foreign language learning from an early age. (CURRICULUM STANDARDS, 2014, Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 5).

in the teaching of Spanish in Jamaica, including both national curricular guidelines and proposals for more adequate didactic and methodological options.

The cartographic approach followed, which postulates the principle of intervention, fostered important exchanges between the participants and the researcher during the interview process. Such approach, which at the same time involved principles of ethnography, created ideal opportunities for deriving knowledge from both content and context of the interviews, allowing at the same time to “monitor the processes [and] intervene in them, causing changes, catalysing moments in passing these disruptive events that we are interested in knowing” (TEDESCO, et al, 2013, p. 2).

#### ❖ **Unstructured conversations.**

Interviews offered an invaluable wealth of information, as they triggered discussions that led to conform a perceptual map based on the interpretation of the narratives shared by the participants. However, upon conclusion of this long process, there were still some lingering issues that needed further discussion. Interviews were all in-depth and semi-structured, based on leading points upon which participants communicated their views, beliefs and convictions. The nature of this cartographic research approach, however, allowed for further conversations aimed at enhancing some of the issues previously discussed.

Unstructured conversations took the form of a second round of interviews, since they targeted some of the participants who had previously contributed. During these conversations, participants were encouraged to expand on some of their previous points; or present any new notion as they deemed fit for the occasion. The questions asked at this time were generated during the conversations, and it was noted that participants were more relaxed this time around.

As mentioned above, new participants were called upon for these unstructured conversations. Different from the Jamaican Spanish teachers interviewed before, these new participants presented views derived from their experiences at the Ministry of Education; thus exposing the process up to the perspective of persons in authority. Other new participants were researchers involved in similar topics, but at other educational levels (primary and tertiary) and mostly from the perspective of Standard Jamaican English. It was interesting to note that many of the issues communicated by Spanish teachers, particularly in regards to poor reading and writing skills, had also been found in other disciplines.

Therefore, this instrument helped expand on the notions discussed during the interviews and, with the inclusion of new participants, it allowed broadening the perceptual perspectives of the narratives found at the field.



### ❖ Narratives

The cartographic approach applied to this qualitative research was paramount in ascertaining all possible sources of information. Participants' individual stories, as well as those stories that transpired from their working contexts, allowed the researcher to "dive into the geography of affections and, at the same time, invent bridges to cross" (STEPS & CASTRUP, 2013), which led to the creation and recreation of new stories, as they intermixed with the researcher's own story during a process of interpretation; or as FREITAS (2003) points out:

[The] research becomes a constructive/ interpretive process, by way of which, knowledge becomes a construction of the researcher [The researcher] is a social being that brands and is branded by his/her own context. Being immersed on the research field means, in fact, penetrating a different reality and becoming part of it; but carrying into that new situation all that makes him a concrete being; which is now dialoguing with the newly found world. (FREITAS, 2003, 6).

Each interview/conversation was seen as a personal narrative; both quite useful instruments for eliciting information. Indeed, it was the participants' narratives, as interpreted by the researcher, which helped shape the perceptual map intended with this research. Likewise, the surrounding elements were seen as part of a narrative involving the perception of Jamaican Creole and its spatial distribution and use. There was a subliminal narrative in the shapes and conditions of buildings, the composition of student populations, the classroom disposition and furniture. Such narrative pointed towards a predominant presence of Creole speakers in rural and deep rural and poor communities, while Standard Jamaican English seems to be more prevalent in up-scale, well-kept schools.

The instruments referred above were central to the research; however, due to their nature of being applied directly in the field while in contact with participants, it was kept in mind that ethical issues were extremely relevant (PATTON, 2002), particularly in the case of interviews and narrations that involved intimate information at time directly affecting the participants, especially because they were sharing aspects of their lives, as well as their thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and personal experiences. Therefore, instruments were only applied after getting consent from the participants, particularly about the use of a recording device.

The video recording devices were paramount for this research, as they allowed to create an invaluable memory of the content of interviews, as well as reactions and body language, discursive items, and the whole contextual background that became central to the narrative

being generated in the process. All was considered important, since the data generated was filtered through a holistic vision to draw the desired perceptual map.

A holistic approach explicitly integrates ontology, epistemology, methodology, and method, and can be thought of as a nexus—the research nexus. In other words, a holistic approach requires researchers not to disavow their underlying belief systems but rather to examine how their ontological and epistemological perspectives impact methodology. Therefore, a holistic approach views research as a process rather than an event. In this regard, adopting a holistic approach means the researcher views all research choices, from topic selection to final representation, as interrelated. (NAGY & LEAVY, 2011, p. 7).

Consequently, while applying the research instruments, consideration was given to the multiple ontological criteria, axiomatic values and epistemological positions revealed in the process; most of which differ from that of the researcher's, who at no point considered holding the ultimate truth. Delving onto the research field, doing interviews, holding unstructured and informal conversations, grasping a multiplicity of narratives was seen as a learning process; a moment for knowledge creation leading to the grasping of a multiplicity of heterogeneous and temporal truths (DELEUZE, 1973).

Such holistic view of the methodological approach facilitated the understanding of the perceived complexities existing among participants and within their contextual realities. Furthermore, the holistic view contributed in establishing links between participants' perceptions and conceptions, their contextual realities and the criteria lingering around in the Jamaican society; as well as their reflection in school contexts. Furthermore, the incorporation of socio-historical and socio-psychological into the holistic view allowed exploring individual personalities, collective trends, socio-cultural constructions and their relationships, as well as the circumstances and specific contexts where they appear; all of which helped shape a narrative that was mapped as the participants' perceptual views on the matter researched. The holistic view also allowed to combine the understanding of how the past is engaged with the present, and how those aspects are at the basis of the participants' methodological choices and teaching procedures. Overall, the holistic view on the generated data was central to this study as it allowed to view the value of all data generated, regardless of the sources or the manner in which it was communicated/interpreted by the researcher.

#### **3.6.4. Data Sources and Procedures for Data Generation**

The cartographic approach followed for generating qualitative data about language perceptions and conceptions in Jamaica required the use of different analytical perspectives, namely rhizomatic, ethnographic, and socio-historical; as well as various instruments (see

II.4.c). Data generation was mainly based on a direct observation of the field and discussions held within the context where participants develop their activities. PATTON (2002) summarizes the advantages of generating data from the direct observation at the research field as follows:

a) It allows the researcher to attain a better grasp of the context in which participants interact, and this understanding is essential to a holistic perspective;

b) It provides first-hand experience and data on participants and their context; which may be more open, oriented and inductive, given that "being on the site, the observer must rely less on preconceptions about the context, whether from written documents or verbal reports" (PATTON, 2002, p. 262);

c) It offers opportunities for seeing things that people fail to notice because they have become part of their daily routines;

d) It creates opportunities for the researcher to observe and learn things that participants might have obviated or may have been unwilling to share during the interview;

e) It affords a better grasping of the selective perceptions of others; especially due a probable contextualization of the meanings conveyed by participants.

g) It provides opportunities for direct and personal contact with participants, fostering personal relationships that communicate impressions and feelings that may become relevant data.

Being at the field and carrying out direct observations and discussions with the participants facilitated the research process considerably. Nonetheless, during the research process, the researcher was careful to give due consideration to the specificity of observations expected of a cartographic approach, given that the participants observed were not inanimate objects. Hence, rather than a researchers' passive observation, emphasis was placed on dialoguing with the participants.

The object of human sciences is man, a social being who has the skill of speaking and expression. It is not a thing, or a natural phenomenon. Man is always speaking and creating texts. It is impossible to grasp a man, his life, his work, his struggle, without considering the meanings created or about to be created. Physical actions of men need to be understood as acts that cannot be understood outside of their expressed meanings, which are recreated [by the researcher]. (FREITAS, 2003, p. 8).

Therefore, considering every aspect of the participants' context, dialoguing with them, and generating data from their surrounding environ led to developing a holistic understanding of the matter being researched. The cartographic approach, thus, provided understanding

concerning data sources derived from combination of "observations, interviews and analysis of documents" (PATTON, 2002, p. 306). Apart from the data volunteered by participants during their interviews, every object and/or element found in the context was considered valuable: the contextual realities at educational institutions, written documents, curricular guidelines, television programmes, radio debates, newspaper articles and columns, social network exchanges, and so on. Indeed, the combination of data sources allowed capturing "both the richness of daily life and the effects of official policies, conceptual and philosophical analysis, and so much more" (FINE & WEIS, 2004).

In that regard, it would be suitable to point out that instruments and procedures for data generation were strategically chosen. The selection of research methods, sources, tools and procedures are not passive strategies; since they are designed and chose to "reveal, allow and show different types of identities" (FINE & WEIS 2004, p.29). Given the overarching goal of exploring personal and shared narratives among Jamaican Creole-speaking teachers of Spanish, and after careful consideration of context specificities, the researcher opted for the following cartographic procedures:

- ✓ Carrying out a preliminary study based on the responses to the exploratory questionnaire, with the aim of determining strategic participants;
- ✓ Doing a literature review on theoretical sources to build on the theoretical information about Jamaica, its language situation, and all related matters;
- ✓ Carrying out an exploratory observation of participants' workings contexts to be informed about the connection between the contextual situation and participants contributions;
- ✓ Conducting interviews in those working contexts in order to achieve a better understanding of the participants' messages; thus avoiding probable 'noises' and keeping the messages as contextualized as possible;
- ✓ Using elements of the context as data sources (buildings, classrooms, student composition, foreign language classroom objects and details, such as textbooks, posters, printed messages, grammar charts, or any other didactical material used);
- ✓ Observing social and economic life in Jamaica; as well as political events, media publications and their ensuing debates.

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<sup>72</sup> See Appendix B

### 3.6.5. Data analysis

Chapter III presents a discussion concerning the analysis of the data generated at the research field. Overall, it may be stated that the data led to achieving the overarching goal of this research. Upon conclusion of the process, it was possible to create a map including the knowledge process activated in regards to language narratives; also touching on language perceptions, conceptions and attitudes, beliefs and positions that participants had communicated. The knowledge created also served to map contextual observations and the researcher's interpretation of the meanings conveyed by those who were observed (PATTON, 2002, p. 262).

Data analysis constituted a valuation of various sources. Apart from the interviews, a wealth of information was found in academic, didactic, audio, audio-visual and media publication materials; which were considered useful for creating knowledge about the field researched, as well as for the grasping/interpreting personal and social narratives at play in the context of Jamaica. Bearing in mind, nonetheless, caveat presented in PATTON (2002) in connection with the "selective" nature of insights and understandings that take place in the process, given that "when looking at the same scene or objective, different people will see different things [because what] people "see" is highly dependent on their interests, biases, and backgrounds" (OP. CIT. p. 260). Thus, it is important to be pointed out that subjectivity played a significant role, both the researcher's and the participants'. Data generation and analysis about participants' perceptions and conceptions were filtered through the conceptions and perceptions of the researcher's.

The cartographic approach followed for data generation required complete focus and a considerable amount of discipline, since data could be found anywhere around the field. Data generation, organization and analysis required a complete focus in order to find ways for seeing and describing notions and attitudes that might not have been so obvious, such as body language expressions (gestures, chuckles, giggling, teeth kissing, hesitations, and others); as well as elements of the physical context (school compound location and status of repair, classroom furniture, student composition and behaviour, etc.). All the elements mentioned above were included in the data analysis process; given that this research aimed at carrying out "direct and naturalistic" cartographic observations, within a specific cultural context of the research participants (PATTON, 2002).

The cartographic approach, hence, paved the way for a research methodology marked by the "exotopic and anthropophagic" (ROLNIK 1989, p. 65) role of the researcher, as an outsider that entered the research field in order to generate data directly from the context. Such

holistic data generation perspective prompted the use of specific instruments and procedures (notably unstructured conversations and direct observations) and the data analysis was regarded as a knowledge creating process aimed at mapping language narratives among Jamaican Creole-speaking Spanish teachers. Such qualitative research process is summarized in FREITAS (2003) as a process whereby:

The researcher is an individual that meets others and wears their shoes to perceive what they perceive and then returns to his/her place. Such return, such exotopic position, is what allows him/her to achieve an effective understanding of the others; generating a response for what was seen and what was said, or left unsaid. (FREITAS, 2003, p. 8).

### **3.7. Selection of Participants. Rationale.**

The *purposeful* selection of participants included initially a group of Jamaican Creole users who were Spanish teachers and within the 25 - 35 age group. The intention was to select participants who were part of the social squadron most impacted by language debates in Jamaica, and it was expected that such multiplicity of views would reflect during the interview process.

The original plan was to interview student-teachers, considering the possible impact of this research-intervention on their education as Spanish teachers. However, for reasons unknown to the researcher, none of the chosen teachers' institutions responded to the researchers' requests of permission to enter the premises and conduct the research. The reasons for such indifference may offer material for another research; as it appears to be a complicated issue that deserves a more detailed attention.

Sometimes no matter how much forethought we put into our research design plans, *the practice of research* gets complicated, and one of the following scenarios occurs: Unforeseen issues arise that make the strategy difficult to work with; we may realize our methodology needs to be revised—as well as our methods design. For example, we may find that once our study is put into practice; we are not eliciting the data we are interested in; or the data we are gathering suggest something unexpected that prompts a reexamination of our study. A qualitative grounding allows for the revision of a methodology as warranted if the researcher's philosophical belief system promotes this kind of fluidity. (NAGY & LEAVY, 2011, p. 6).

All of the above! Practical circumstances brought about the need to divert from the original research plan, which led to a strategic change in participant selection. The age group remained the same, because there was a strong assumption as to the significant impact that age group would have in the knowledge-creation process expected. However, in practice, participants were selected from the group of teachers who are currently working in Jamaica.

The strategic change proved quite successful; as their contributions were punctual and offered a great “amount of information about the topic of the research” (FLYVBJERG, 2006, p. 229). Furthermore, the selected participants allowed the research to be directly connected to the contextual realities being faced by Spanish teachers in Jamaica.

Participants were selected based on their responses to the exploratory questionnaire. Such responses, albeit brief and at the surface, served as significant hints of their perceptions and conceptions with respect to Jamaican Creole and its impact on the teaching/learning of Spanish. As previously stated, participant selection was not random. They were chosen based on their bold and multiple positions in connection with the overarching goal sought by the researcher. So, participant selection was a strategic step leading to the overarching goal.

Being a Creole speaker was also a criterion. It is important to point out that, not all Spanish teachers currently working in Jamaica are Jamaicans and, likewise, not all Jamaicans are Creole speakers. Hence the need to include that category in the exploratory questionnaire. Furthermore, the strategic participant selection involved geographical and spatial considerations. Hence, participants selected were living and/or working in different regions of the island. This strategic move helped obtain more information about the perceptions in regards to Jamaica Creole regional varieties, and their impact on Spanish teaching/learning processes.

Another criterion was the selection of Spanish teachers who were currently inserted in secondary education institutions. Such strategic selection responded to the practical aspects concerning the educational landscape of Jamaica. Despite the experimental exercises in primary education, the bulk of Spanish as a subject matter occurs in secondary education. Hence, participants were teachers working with students that were less exposed to foreign language education, but that were also affected by their proximity to the extensive use of Jamaican Creole. These were significant factors, given that the participating Spanish teachers were compelled to employ teaching methods and procedures according to the linguistic reality in which their students operate. So, their perceptions would split into a) their notions as Jamaican Creole users who are teaching a foreign language, and b) their teaching procedures aimed at facilitating their students’ transition from a Creole speaking context towards Spanish learning; except that they had to contend with the fact that their Language of Instruction was other than the Official Language of Education. So, participants were selected based on their views on how to handle such conflict, and prepare their students to excel in Regional Exams and their future tertiary education (in Standard English).

### **3.7.1. Ethical Considerations**

At all stages, the researcher took into account ethical considerations to protect participants. Despite the lack of a specific policy regarding research in schools in Jamaica, there are regulations to protect children and adolescents against immoral attacks; which require a lot of transparency with respect to the type of relationship that will be set with any participant in that age group. There are also regulations concerning access to educational premises and school compounds. That protective element requires clarity in communicating with authorities such as the Ministry of Education, the management of the schools, and teachers directly involved in the research.

Participants were very open and fraternal during their interviews, nonetheless, they were asked to pick nicknames to protect their identities. They also chose Standard English as the language they preferred to express their views.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, they approved the use of a camera to videotape the interviews. These recordings have been of paramount importance, not only because they present the content of responses exactly as expressed, but also because they allowed a better cartographic perspective; hence a more detailed observation about the school overall environment, the type and status of furniture, the students' general behaviour, as well as participants' body language when expressing their views; all of which provided invaluable information to better perceive conceptions and perceptions around Jamaican Creole.

In view of such an important aspect, the researcher took care in communicating the participants about all intends and purposes of the research. They were informed about the objectives and the scope of the research. After explaining the cartographic nature of the research, they were asked for permission to video-record the sessions. Their willingness to cooperate was not taken for granted, and they were also informed about the course the research might take based on its outcomes.

### **3.8. Researcher's Role**

This research was an enjoyable task. The set-backs at the beginning, mainly due to teachers' institutions' perceived unwillingness to cooperate, did not fester the research process; since the research was seen as "socially situated" in a context where issues of Jamaican Creole language and speakers are highly debatable and unresolved; educational institutions usually perceived as stalwarts advocating for conservative language views that continue to deride the extended use and value of Jamaican Creole. Nonetheless, the participants selected were highly

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<sup>73</sup> They were asked to choose between English and Spanish. Jamaican Creole was not considered because the researcher is not a Jamaican Creole user.



cooperative; their contributions leading to a significant perceptual map of Spanish teachers perceptions/conceptions. Hence, the researcher's optimism prevailed. Overall, the cartographic approach undertaken, as materialized through a reflective perspective, helped reaffirm the notion that there are "no privileged views on getting at the truth in the generation of research problems, processes, and accounts because these things are, like the researcher, socially situated" (SMYTH and SHACKLOCK, 2004, p.7).

The role of the researcher mostly involved a reflective perspective, without disregarding her awareness of her own identity as a Cuban naturalized Jamaican; not a Creole speaker, and a Spanish native-speaker teacher at the tertiary level. Those factors positioned the researcher mostly as an outsider, observing a context and reflecting on how the participants, dwellers of such context, perceived their own reality. The nature as an outsider played a role in grasping the Jamaican context, and despite her own subjectivities, the researcher's perception was not fully compromised; hence deriving constructions based on the perceptions, conceptions and notions communicated by the participants:

As we see it, the process of reflexivity is an attempt to identify, do something about, and acknowledge the limitations of the research: its location, its subjects, its process, its theoretical context, its data, its analysis, and how accounts recognize that the construction of knowledge takes place in the world and not apart from it. (SMYTH & SHACKLOCK', 2004, p. 6-7).

On the other hand, it should also be considered that the researcher's over twenty years of teaching and living experience in Jamaica was the main motivation for this research. That experience build-up into a subjectivity that helped to inform the research process and shaped the researcher's constructions about the phenomenon. Therefore, the motivation for this research process sprung from observations and experiences gathered from years of living and teaching in Jamaica that had shaped the beliefs and assumptions carried into the field, and which later combined through a "dialogic encounter" (FREITAS, 2003, p. 10) with those found in the research field and helped construct "new meaning working as a new socio-discursive form" (FREITAS, 2003, p.11).

The researcher's role was not that of a passive observer, but that of a subject "whose subjectivity interfered with the context; being transformed" in the process (FREITAS, 2003, p. 10). Thus, the researcher's previous knowledge doubtlessly had an impact on her interpretation of the situation, and the knowledge process generated during the process; a process through which new subjectivities grew out the encounter of multiple subjectivities.

### 3.9. Research Principles

This research was guided by key principles that determined its path. Firstly, the use of a qualitative method to discover/interpret participants' constructions, perspectives, beliefs and perceptions. That is, based on a cartographic analytical approach, it was understood that the data generated provided grounds for interpreting personal and shared narratives that unveiled specific worldviews amongst Jamaican teachers of Spanish. Secondly, the studies were conducted within the specific contexts and surrounding environment where the participants develop their teaching activities. Thirdly, the researcher was the primary tool for data generation, being present at all interviews and fostering lively discussions with participants. Fourthly, the use of inductive analysis of data to identify the participants' multiplicity of views, beliefs, perspectives and realities; in order to discover "patterns, themes, and categories" emerging out of the data (PATTON, 2002, P.453). Fifthly, the researcher's criticality was born in mind, as there was awareness that a study of Jamaican Creole users' narratives was, ultimately, the researcher's interpretation of participants' views, beliefs, worldviews, perceptions and conceptions. Furthermore, the researcher was aware that such narratives were, in turn, informed by the Jamaican social discourse, as was observed in the heated discussions around published papers, articles and newspaper columns. Hence, the instruments and principles specified above were applied while considering a critical perspective on the part of the researcher during the discussions with participants. That is to say, views, beliefs, perceptions and conceptions were accepted as significant and having the same value as facts.

Undeniably, this qualitative research methodology, approached from a cartographic analytical perspective that materialized through the use of the instruments and the principle outlined above, provided important data leading to the elucidation of the research questions. Thus, the research contributed to: a) enhancing awareness about the issue of language in Jamaica; b) fostering a better understanding of the impact of Jamaican Creole in the teaching / learning of Spanish; and c) benefiting the theoretical and didactical stock of Spanish teaching methods in the island.

Nonetheless, the cartographic approach followed provided grounds for a critical unveiling of such findings; not as a straight representation, but as a critical construction of participants' narratives, with the purpose of promoting a change in lenses by fostering a renewed view of Jamaican Creole; not as a language 'by-product', but as a new and authentic rhizome. Therefore, the researchers' critical positioning had the intention of motivating a shift towards positions that reject the linguistic prejudice observed during the research process in Jamaica, and which transpired from observations of social debates on the media, as well as

from some interviews. Linguistic prejudice seems to be an issue of contention in the Jamaican society, and it may be one of the issues that impact the choice of more adequate teaching methods for the reality of Jamaican learners.

The critical perspective of this research also had a bearing on the understanding of the principle of knowledge co-creation. The cartographic approach and the instruments chosen, hence, were seen as elements of co-participation and intervention; understood from the perspective proposed in PASSOS & KASTRUP (2013):

Cartography is intervention and participatory research, because it accepts the protagonist of the "object". In that regard, it is important to include the "object" in the data analysis process; thus rejecting its anonymity. Analysing becomes, hence, a participatory work that includes what was not initially in the horizon of the research. The "object" becomes a protagonist to the extent that it indicates what should be considered as the analysis and argumentative categories that select and organize the research data. (OP. CIT. p. 399).

Therefore, from the perspective followed through this research process, criticality means going through a moment of co-creation by way of a dialogue between multiple positions/narratives. It also involves a great amount of reflexivity and awareness of the researcher's own implications in the construction of knowledge. None of the parties involved holds the 'truth', but all of them, including the researcher, are co-participants in the knowledge being generated in the research. In fact, there is not one 'truth', but a multiplicity of 'truths' or "subjectivities" which combine to create the new knowledge by transforming and forging new narratives or subjectivities.

During research-intervention and studies on subjectivity creation processes we are dealing with narratives. The data gathered show the participants' and the researcher's ways of narrating. Data portrayal and analysis, as well as the conclusions drawn will depend on a particular narrative perspective (PASSOS & KASTRUP 2013, p. 400).

This critical approach facilitated a better perception of the complexities found in the Jamaican context, as reflected in the macro and micro social aspects observed during the research process. The study allowed understanding how the researcher participates in the generation of data, and also how the participants' perceptions/conceptions are linked to their level of linguistic awareness, and by extension to their methodological and pedagogical choices during their Spanish lessons.

### 3.10. Final Remarks on the Research Methodology

This qualitative research on language narratives involved a combination of a cartographic approach with a rhizomatic analytical perspective, as well as principles of historical and sociolinguistic researches. Hence, it would be fair to argue that the research methodology followed was holistic, in the sense that it aimed at *observing* every aspect of the context where the participating Spanish teachers operate, and *seeing* everything, including the not-so-obvious facts and objects of that context; as well as *listening* to the perceptions and conceptions expressed during interviews while also *hearing* the unsaid, either by body language expressions of contextual hints that may have passed unnoticed to others.

Furthermore, the research endeavours mentioned above were supported by naturalistic and reflexive principles that allowed unveiling explicit and implicit perceptions and conceptions among participants, researcher included. Such principles also facilitated a grasping of plausible connections between participants' language perceptions and conceptions and their teaching practices; given that data analysis showed a manifestation of the participating Spanish teachers' perceptions and conceptions through their methodological choices.

The research methodology outlined in this chapter was paramount in the process leading towards the overarching goal of knowing and understanding the narratives of Jamaican Creole-speaking Spanish teachers. Nonetheless, having derived from practical considerations concerning the teaching of Spanish in Jamaica, this research also aims at proposing ideas concerning the transformation of teaching practices in the hope that it may be more adequate to the language situation in the island.

While in naturalistic inquiry one avoids imposing preconceived analytical categories on the data, as fieldwork comes to an end, experience with the setting will usually have led to thinking about prominent themes and dimensions that organize what has been experienced and observed. These emergent ideas, themes, concepts, and dimensions –generated inductively through fieldwork – can also now be deepened, further examined, and verified during closure period in the field. (PATTON, 2002, p. 323).

Obviously, ideas derived from the research field will continue to reproduce in the field, as the knowledge creating process is endless. The data generated for this research may not be seen as permanent markers of the Spanish teacher's contextual realities. In fact, if seen as a cartographic knowledge gathering and generation exercise, then it would be suitable to argue, with DELEUZE & GUATTARI (1987), that such data is a plateau of information, and that it by no means covers the entire spectrum of language narratives; nor from the Creole speaking

Spanish teaching group, nor from the individuals themselves, as they are part of a rhizomatic and ever-transformational process.

Therefore, the discourse produced through the research methodology followed and through data generation and analysis ought to be seen as a moment of subjectivity creation. That is, an interpretative moment about language narratives among Jamaican Creole speaking teachers of Spanish. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this research becomes a fruitful moment resulting from the collaborative exercise “marked by a holistic perspective and built out of the commonality of meanings created between the researcher and the researched” (FREITAS, 2003, p. 9).

#### 4. CHAPTER III. NARRATIVES AROUND JAMAICAN CREOLE. DATA DISCUSSION ON LANGUAGE CONCEPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS.

*We must differentiate the "speech of the mind" of that "other" speech expressed in words (Aristotle).*

##### 4.1. Introductory Remarks

The discussion about participants' perceptions and conceptions about Jamaican Creole leads to the interpretation of multiple narratives within the participating group. The data generated has motivated observations in regards to how the interviewed participants perceive the linguistic situation of Jamaica, particularly around Jamaican Creole. The points of divergence and agreement observed during the research process have guided the goal pursued in this chapter, basically that of attaining an understanding of how the participating Spanish teachers, who are all Jamaican Creole users, perceive the linguistic situation of Jamaica, per se, and in connection with the teaching and learning of Spanish.

This chapter is subdivided into sessions that include a description of the research process, including participants' profiles, aimed at establishing who they were and why they fit into the desired category of Jamaican Creole-Speaking Spanish teacher, as well as the semi-structured questions used to guide the discussions. Another session is dedicated to the detailed discussion of findings, including a breakdown of the participant's narratives based on the analysis of the data generated. The conclusions of this chapter present partial statements relating to the research findings.

It is worth stating that all the observations discussed in this chapter are based on the researcher's interpretation about the field observed, based on the premise that every observation/interpretation is filtered through the perceptions and conceptions carried by researcher into the research field. This particular interactional aspect may result from the fact that both the "criteria for expression and conception of subject matter" originate "in thoughts and emotions already possessed or to be conveyed" (MCKEON, 1947, p. 21).

The assertion in MCKEON (1947) shows the importance of sociocultural, psychological and historical contexts that, in general, surround both the speaker and the listener. It would be prudent, hence, to agree with the author in that there are situations that form and guide language conceptions and perceptions. Therefore, whatever background is brought into play by both speakers and listeners will have an impact on the interpretative process that unfolds; i.e., speakers will reflect their background in their criteria and ideas, and listeners, in turn, will interpret the messages conveyed according to their own sociocultural,

socio-historical and ideological background; both co-participating in the essential meaning-making nature of language.

Every meaning-making practice makes use of two elements: a signifier and a signified [...] The signifier (sound or word) in itself is not a sign unless someone recognizes it as such and relates it to a signified (concept). A sign is therefore neither the word itself nor the object it refers to but the relation between the two. (KRAMSCH, 1998, p. 15).

Therefore, meaning-making is a social action between speakers and listeners that leads to the understanding of explicit and implicit connotations carried in the utterances; which may be lost if the listener were to focus strictly on the external aspects (words, sounds and structures), or if such listener were unfamiliar with the sociolinguistic context justifying such utterance. Being able to understand those explicit and implicit connotations has been paramount during this research; not only because it has allowed grasping participants' conceptions and perceptions, but it has also provided suitable material for creating a perceptual map based on the co-created meaning between the researcher and the participants. Nonetheless, it would be pertinent to bear in mind that meaning (co)creation is based on "hypothetical constructs or conceptual tools (tools that may be of only temporary use) in a process of inquiry" (WERTSCH, 1995, p. 60).

In this spirit, I propose that mental functioning and sociocultural setting be understood as dialectically interacting moments, or aspects of a more inclusive unit of analysis –*human action*. As understood here, action is not carried out either by the individual or by society, although there are individual and societal moments to any action. For related reasons, an account of action cannot be derived from the study of mental functioning or sociocultural setting in isolation. Instead, action provides a context within which the individual and society (as well as mental functioning and sociocultural context) are understood as interrelated moments. (WERTSCH, 1995, p. 60).

Thus, mental functioning, as exposed through perceptions and conceptions, may be best understood if analysed in connection with the social context where they originate. Such notion fits into the line of thought developed through this thesis, where due consideration has been given to the interconnection that exists between the Jamaican context and the perceptions/conceptions participants communicated during their interviews. Such combination of the external form of an expression and the discourse of the mind plays an important role in the process of communication; a moment constructed by speakers and listeners in what could be termed as an exchange of subjectivities. In this sense, it is worth considering the proposal

in FARACO (2010) concerning the pertinence of staying away from language conceptions which remain focused on purely external aspects:

We can see that all these ideas have one thing in common. They understand the language, as a reality itself (a grammatical system, a monument, an instrument); as if it had a life of its own, opened to its speakers, the dynamics of social relations, of the movements of history. (FARACO, PERSONAL BLOG).

This approach is an essential paradigm in this research. The points of view evidenced during the research process, and interpreted in the analysis of the data generated in Jamaica, may be seen as part of mental discourses; both of the Participants' and the researcher's. It would also be suitable to understand that language has a multiplicity of uses and purposes; hence, perceptions and conceptions are multiple; not of "a singular natural kind" (PICCININI and SCOTT 2006, p.395). Such approach resonates throughout this research; given that the researcher has interpreted the data generated as a mental discourse that encapsulates the notions underpinning the participants' perceptions and conceptions about Jamaican Creole as a language, as well as its impact on Spanish teaching and learning. The perceptions and conceptions observed in the research process may then be seen as notions constructed by both the participants and the researcher through their knowledge building process; given that interpretative processes tend to be impacted by undercurrents of mind discourses, particularly in aspects such as the following, as proposed in PICCININI and SCOTT (2006, p.397):

a)     The **discrimination** of information. Participants underlined those facts that they considered most relevant, leaving aside other facts which in their opinion were not as relevant, but which were later highlighted by other participants. Views about the impact of Jamaican Creole on the teaching/learning of Spanish as a foreign language are quite diverse, ranging from complete acceptance to absolute negation of the use of Jamaican Creole in class. Different angles are also evidenced in regards to the status of Jamaican Creole as a language, from an absolute conviction to a resolute doubt, based on the supposed inability of this language to stand a comparative analysis with universal languages such as Spanish and English. Discrimination of information also prevails in regard to the importance, or not, of *orality* in the learning of Spanish, as well as in regard to the usefulness of Jamaican Creole as a teaching/learning medium. Some see the language as a powerful tool to achieve true learning; others see it only as a tool to develop dramatic situations in a language class. Obviously, the matter of language perceptions and conceptions may be better understood after considering the participants' discrimination mechanisms in respect to the information they provide.



b) **Non-linguistic inference** about objects in the world, such as negative experiences. Behind the participants' perceptions and conceptions, there is a plethora of experiences, personal stories, as well as social and personal criteria, that underlie and guide their stances or positioning<sup>74</sup> in respect to the matter discussed. For some participants, the fact of having been born within a Creole speaking context does not always translate in love or attachment towards the language, whereas there are others who, despite having grown up in the midst of a Standard Jamaican English speaking family and with parents who required the use of Standard Jamaican English at all times, express views indicating love and attachment to Jamaican Creole.

c) **Categorization** in terms of associations of stimuli and responses in connection with certain phenomena, and choosing an attitude or behaviour towards such stimuli. Categorization is a relevant aspect of the mental discourse implied by the participants, which has worked as a primary guidance in this research; especially when considering the diverse manifestations and points of view amongst participants in regards to Jamaican Creole. Each participant addressed the issue from a personal perspective, within their specific cartographic context; therefore revealing their perceptions and conceptions based on their own categorizations of the linguistic phenomena in question. Clearly, the categorization process of the researcher was also involved, specifically in regards to the choice of Participants. It was not a random, but a strategic choice; based on the Participants' profession (teachers of Spanish), nationality (Jamaican), age group (between 25 and 35 years), and the educational level where they render services (secondary education).

Obviously, there is a caveat when following the speeches of the minds surfacing from the Participants' processes of discrimination, categorization and life experience narratives, since there may be a significant chance of getting entangled in a web of stereotypical assertions, both emerging from the Participants' views and from the Researcher's constructions, and which may impair the resulting understanding of narratives. Nonetheless, the Research Field was approached from a notion that there may be 'positive' stereotypes, in the sense that they can help construct and/or reaffirm social identities, such as that of 'Creole-speaker' group as opposed to other groups:

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<sup>74</sup> Following positioning theory, an act of personal stereotyping can be defined as a speech act that is (a) part of a specific story- line, (b) used in order to position both speaker and the object of the stereotyping, and (c) draws upon social representations of the stereotyped objects (the cultural stereotypes) which are available in certain moral orders (LANGENHOVE & HARRE, 1994, p.367).

Theories of stereotypes can be broadly classified into two groups: those explaining stereotyping in terms of socio-cultural causes and those explaining stereotyping in terms of intrapersonal processes. Amongst the socio-cultural theories of stereotyping can be counted [those] which assume individual motives to achieve or maintain positive social identities. Such motives may lead to positively differentiation of the in-group from other groups, though this, by itself, would not entail the existence of stereotypes. (LANGENHOVE & HARRE, 1994, p. 360).

It has been widely accepted that the term ‘stereotype’ carries a negative connotation, and its use in this thesis may seem a bit odd; but if seen in the light of the quotation above, then it may be fitting to admit that, for practical reasons of this research, the stereotyped view of a Jamaican Creole speaker is, indeed, positive, as it allows a form of profile qualification for this research. Stereotypical assertions were also observed in reference to the Participants’ perceptions regarding school social stratification in the island (discussed in III.5.3.a. further on).

The overriding narrative grasped concerning participants’ assertions in this regard seems to indicate that there is a school categorization that matches the social and linguistic stratification of Jamaica, hence stereotypes such as “deep rural Creole Speaker”, “inner-city underprivileged student”, among others. Most participants based their opinions on their observations about their student populations, and some on general information which can be found on the Ministry of Education database about school student population<sup>75</sup>.

Participants’ narratives also pointed towards a perceived lack of statistics on (mono-lingual) Creole speakers’ territorial or socio-economic distribution in Jamaica, showing the common view that speakers can actually be counted. MAKONI PENNYCOOK (2007) criticized such view stating that:

At the heart of the problem here is the underlying ideology of countability and singularity, reinforced by assumptions of a singular, essentialized language-object situated and physically located in concepts of space founded on a notion of territorialization. The idea of linguistic enumerability and singularity is based on the dual notions of both languages and speakers of those languages being amenable to counting. (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p. 11).

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<sup>75</sup> There is a placement process in high schools. However, Chief education officer in the Ministry of Education, Dr. Grace McLean announced that the GSAT exam will be replaced by the “Primary Exit Profile (PEP)”, an examination that will focus “more on higher-order thinking, so the students will get an opportunity to review, to synthesise, to evaluate and to apply the knowledge” acquired, hence moving “away from “this whole business of recalling what they would have learnt over a three-year period”. The PEP process shall promote a greater level of understanding, and will separate school placement from the exam. (See Annex E.) (Source <http://www.moe.gov.jm/exam-replace-gsat-pushed-back-2018>).

Any observer may question the difficulty of finding accurate and updated figures on the number of mono-lingual Creole speakers and their exact spatial distribution, given the small territorial and population size of Jamaica. However, in agreement with the assertion presented in MAKONI PENNYCOOK (2007), and based on the perspective adopted in this research, it may be fitting to argue that, if the development of a language is a rhizomatic process, then such *countability* and *territorialization* may prove futile; given that, as long as its speakers continue to use the language, Jamaican Creole will continue to grow exponentially and indefinitely. Nonetheless, during their interviews and based on their perceptions, participants positioned themselves in regards to speaker distribution in Jamaica, and the possible correlation between language and the socioeconomic stratification in Jamaica.

#### 4.2. At the Research Field

The process departed from questionnaires<sup>76</sup> administered among Spanish teachers currently working in Jamaica with the purpose of choosing Jamaica-born/Creole speakers/Spanish teachers willing to embark on a process of interviews. The questions were aimed at determining the age group, the possibility of controversial positions in regards to the research topic, as well as the educational level where they work. Based on their responses, the group of participants was chosen. The interviews were developed in two rounds: The **First Round** of Interviews was developed among Jamaican teachers involved in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in Jamaica. This round was semi-structured and included open questions. Widening the scope through un-structured conversations, the **Second Round** allowed generating extended and deeper data on language narratives among some of the participants in the first round and other participants who were interviewed in order to deepen on the matter of language narratives and, at the same time, triangulate the information obtained.

The **First Round** of interviews contributed important points in connection with the research topic, particularly in regards to the matter of perceptions of Jamaican Creole and its presence and use, in the life of most Jamaicans, as well as in school interactions and activities, including language lessons. An interesting fact in this regard is the way in which the participating Spanish teachers, being aware of the linguistic reality of their students, declared to adopt flexible language attitudes and carry out activities geared towards the enhancement of the teaching and learning of Spanish, using Jamaican Creole as the initial language of reference; but, after having achieved comprehension on the part of students, they feel the need to repeat their explanations in Standard Jamaican English, the officially established language of

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<sup>76</sup> See Appendix A.

education in the island. Most of the participating teachers subscribe to the above teaching procedure. It could be argued, in this regard, that those teachers are following the logics of common sense; however, such procedure is, in fact, proposed in the MEC Language Police document (p. 23):

- 1) Declare the Jamaican Language situation bilingual ascribing equal language status to SJE and JC<sup>77</sup>. Tailor instruction to accommodate this status, and permit instruction and assessment in both languages. Produce printed materials in both languages, and permit teaching in both languages using appropriate instructional strategies.
- 2) While retaining SJE as the official language, promote the acquisition of basic literacy in the early years (e.g. K – 3<sup>78</sup>) in the home language and facilitate the development of English as a second language.
- 3) Maintain SJE as the official language and promote basic communication through the oral use of the home language in the early years (e.g. K -3) while facilitating the development of literacy in English.
- 4) Continue in a bi-dialectal mode but pay closer attention to the methods of instruction that will facilitate competence in the official language.
- 5) Engage in immersion in English through exposure to literature and interactive/communicative strategies, while being tolerant of the use of Creole by students who experience difficulty communicating in the official language.

All the points included above also transpired from participants' statements, showing a level of awareness about this document and therefore also about this issue that leads them to "accommodate" the status of all speakers in the classroom. Participants' actual statements during interviews, as well as the cartographic observations of the schools (the work environment, the classrooms, the language environment) show a regular and pervasive presence of the three languages in the classrooms. This situation probably springs from methods usually observed among Spanish teachers, by means of which Spanish lessons heavily rely on language comparisons, especially the grammatical aspects of Spanish and/or English, with Jamaican Creole in many cases.

Based on ideas emerging from previous research<sup>79</sup>, which contributed important theoretical and practical basis to prepare and guide the interview process, interviews were mainly aimed at closing gaps in relation to perceptions about the situation of Jamaican Creole<sup>80</sup> and its impact on the teaching of Spanish<sup>81</sup>. Furthermore, this research aimed at enhancing previous findings in connection with Participants' conceptions of language and perceptions

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<sup>77</sup> Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole.

<sup>78</sup> Kindergarten to Grade 3.

<sup>79</sup> Research work done by the author while at the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, referenced fully in the next three footnotes.

<sup>80</sup> Sanchez, Maria T. Considerations on the Notion of Decreolization. (2007).

<sup>81</sup> Sanchez, Maria T. Jamaican Creole. Its Influence on Language Teaching and Learning. (2011)

about the status of Jamaican Creole, particularly within an educational environment that imposes Standard Jamaican English as the “official language” of education. Previous research in a tertiary education institution (Northern Caribbean University)<sup>82</sup> showed the pervasive presence and extensive discursive use of Jamaican Creole, despite the stringent institutional policy aimed at enforcing the use of SJE on campus at all times, a policy enforced by the general requirement to do English Language Courses such as *Freshman Composition I* and *Freshman Composition II*. Both courses are included as core courses in all programs. One interesting observation emerging from the previously mentioned research at the Northern Caribbean University<sup>83</sup> was that, despite the stringent institutional language policy, Jamaican Creole continues to be deeply rooted among students, workers, and even faculty who use the language, albeit occasionally and for specific purposes, during some lectures and at other places. Findings in the previously mentioned research, as well in literature review, helped inform the discussions held in this research during interviews.

One aspect that has been noticed, in previous research fields and the current one, is that most educational institutions lack specific language policies explicitly imposing the use of Standard Jamaican English among students. A plausible argument, in such regard, is that educational institution administrations, albeit subtly, condone the also observed fact that Jamaican Creole is regularly spoken at those institutions, in overall interactions and during classes, limiting themselves to “encouraging” teachers to use Standard Jamaican English.

All the previous and current research shows that there is an extensive use of Jamaican Creole, which may be interpreted as a fact that belies the theory of *decreolization*. Hence, it would be prudent to state that, to this date, Jamaican Creole is a consolidated language that has been (and continues to be) transformed (as all languages do), and that is widely used; including during formal instruction. Nonetheless, as the research deepened through interviews, a prevalence of ambivalent attitudes and points of view in regards to Jamaican Creole has been observed. The narrative emerging from the discussions held shows controversial positions in the Participants’ statements. All of them recognized the undeniable presence and relevance of Jamaican Creole which, most of them, without hesitation, termed as the “Mother Tongue” of most Jamaicans; however, they hardly ever problematize the fact that Standard Jamaican English continues to be the Official Language of Education.

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<sup>82</sup> Sanchez, Maria T. *Discursive Code-Switching: A view from the Northern Caribbean University*. <https://www.academia.edu/8152266/> 2011.

<sup>83</sup> Sanchez, Maria T. *Discursive Codeswitching. A view from the Northern Caribbean University* (2012)

Interviews showed that, from the standpoint of participants', Jamaican Creole has overcome its stage as a strictly *home language*<sup>84</sup>, used exclusively among family members and friends, and has achieved a recognizable (and recognized) place in educational institutions, including around school compounds and academic activities. It was noted, as well, that in most participating schools, despite the absence of an established language policy ruling over institutional activities, there is in fact a tendency to *encourage* the use of Standard Jamaican English; especially on account of the stipulations by the Caribbean Examination Council, a body responsible for administering compulsory regional exams.

Caribbean Examination Council<sup>85</sup> (CXC) exams are the only official alternative for obtaining a Secondary Education Certificate. Hence, all students must sit such examinations in most (if not all) the subjects studied at that level. Such exams are set in Standard English<sup>86</sup> and must be passed, for an opportunity to access tertiary education and, hence, better employment opportunities and highly prestigious and high-paying jobs. A salient (and recurrent) issue during the interviews, was the use of the phrase “encourage students to use Standard English” by most participants; which brings forth the perception (on the part of the researcher) that Jamaican Creole is, in fact, widely spoken in schools and that it is an essential language of interaction for most Jamaicans, therefore compelling teachers (Spanish teachers included) to use the language in their lessons, even if forced to retake Standard English as a matter of course, not only because it is stipulated by the Educational Language Policy, but also because of the need to help students succeed in their CXC exams.

The interviews also brought about some reflections in regards to participants' conceptions of language, since they evidenced a thought-provoking diversity concerning participants' attitudes and teaching practices. In urban schools, located in up-scale neighbourhoods, with student populations mainly coming from privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, the participating teachers claimed they use Jamaican Creole only as a cushion to support certain explanations:

I have told my students that since they are required to do their CCEC exam in English, it's not necessary that they speak to me in *Patwa*, but sometimes I feel offended in a

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<sup>84</sup> This seems to be a point of contention still, particularly due to the use of “home language” as a terminology in the Educational Language policy (2001): “It retains SJE as the official language and advocates the policy option which promotes oral use of the home language in schools, while facilitating the development of skills in SJE.

<sup>85</sup> “The CXC Council was established by agreement by fifteen commonwealth Caribbean countries in 1972 and is recognised as the examining body for the area. English is the Official language of CXC Examinations” (Footer inserted in CXC Examination Documents).

<sup>86</sup> Annex F includes an exam paper sample, showing the use of Standard English for instruction and question formulation.

formal setting when the *Patwa* is used, the Creole language is used, and so I teach from English to Spanish. I find it easier, but if I want to get across a dramatic point, I would use *Patwa*. (MARIPOSA, Personal Interview).

These words bring forth serious reflections about certain ideological dimensions concerning the issue of language perception and conception. At this point it would be only fair for the researcher to consider the use of phrases such as “I feel offended”, and question the extent to which the use of Jamaican Creole in a formal setting can be offensive, and the reason why this language happens to be colourful and rich enough but just to allow the expression of dramatic points of view. The observation of Jamaican society at large, indeed, has shown that such perception/conception of Jamaican Creole is very common, including among several Creole speakers.

In most rural schools, or in schools located in poor communities with student populations mostly coming from families with scanty financial means, on the other hand, the prevailing language happens to be Jamaican Creole, “because it's part of the students’ existence and their upbringing, and so it is essential in their understanding of what is being taught” (MAVERICK, Personal Interview). Hence, the participating teachers who work in such schools affirmed that they are teaching two languages (Spanish and English) in one lesson, due to the fact that Standard Jamaican English is closer to a foreign language for many of their full-fledged Creole speakers. It would be forthcoming, hence, to refer to the relation between the latter assertion and one finding of the 2005 JLU Attitude Survey<sup>87</sup>, stating that “Individuals from rural areas were more likely than urban individuals to think that Patwa should be made an official language (72.3% versus 65%)”.

#### 4.3. Participants’ Profile

All participants in the **First Round of Interviews** are Creole users and natives of Jamaica, currently teaching Spanish in Secondary Education institutions located in different regions<sup>88</sup> of Jamaica. The participating cohort is between the ages of 25 and 35 years old, a generation vastly exposed to the controversial debate around Jamaican Creole and its status in the island<sup>89</sup>. That generation was chosen because, having been born during the 1980’s, their most determining formative years have been characterised by their exposure to the controversial language debate in Jamaica. In fact, Participants were chosen precisely for their controversial views in regards to the status of Jamaican Creole and its potential to become an

<sup>87</sup> A study carried out by the Jamaica Language Unit of the University of the West Indies, with the purpose of assessing “views of Jamaicans towards Patwa (Jamaican Creole) as a language” (Op. Cit, p. 6).

<sup>88</sup> Participants were chosen from different regions with the purpose of achieving a wider view of the current language situation in the island.

<sup>89</sup> The language debate in Jamaica became even more relevant between the 1980’s and 1990’s.

Official Language, as well as their stand in regards to the extended use of the language; including in academic activities. The generation to which Participants belong has seen this language grow from the home context (family and friends), to traditionally formal contexts such as educational governmental institutions, such as universities, Parliament and judicial courts.

**Keisha** has been a Spanish teacher for five years and has worked at two very different high-schools: The first, a school located in a rural area with a predominantly Creole-speaking student population. Most students live in a situation of poverty, among families affected by trying financial difficulties and deprivation, with notably low educational level, and limited knowledge of Standard Jamaican English. The second is a school located in a semi-rural area, with a student population of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. At this school, most students and parents are bilingual and both, Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole, are regularly spoken in the school compound and during classes.

**Kent** has been teaching Spanish for ten years. He is currently working at a school that is located in a rural area. Most students are Creole speakers, showing very limited knowledge of Standard Jamaican English. Kent speaks showing a great passion for Jamaican Creole. His perception is that, being the Mother Tongue of most Jamaicans, Jamaican Creole deserves a place in the national language policy. He shows pride about his status as a Creole Speaker, even when he is also fluent in Standard Jamaican English.

**Maverick** has been teaching Spanish for ten years, and is currently teaching at a prestigious school exclusively for men. His students hail from diverse origins, including rural and urban areas. Some of the students are Jamaican Creole native speakers, and some are foreigners that come to that institution attracted by its international prestige. Standard Jamaican English is the official language for all academic activities; however, Creole is actually the language of interaction among students. Before Monroe, Maverick worked at another prestigious school (exclusively for women), where Standard Jamaican English is the language of interaction, both for socialization and academic activities. Maverick also worked at co-ed deep rural school, where Jamaican Creole is the main language of interaction.

**Dane** has been teaching Spanish for five years. He is currently working at an urban up-scaled school exclusively for women. The student population, with few exceptions, mainly hails from upper and upper middle class families. Standard Jamaican English is predominant on campus, for regular academic activities and socialization. This school is characterized by a highly disciplined student population, and a refined and peaceful environment. Building architecture is classy and elegant; all areas being properly painted and clean. The gardens are



well kept, with flowers and trees identified by their scientific names. Overall, upon entering the premises, the ambiance is so quiet that it reminds more of a spiritual retreat than a high school.

**Mariposa** has been teaching Spanish for seventeen years. Apart from her regular tasks as a teacher, she works at an urban institution and serves as Coordinator for the Language Department. Mariposa does not use Jamaican Creole in her classes because, in her opinion, “it is not a language” and, therefore, does not have the formal structures necessary for establishing comparisons. She grew up in the midst of a Creole speaking Family in a rural community, but due to her educational enhancement and marriage, she changed her socioeconomic context. She says her family speaks Standard English all the time and at every place.

**Mika** is currently teaching Spanish at an urban school. She had previously taught at several schools, and reported her experience about a noticeable difference between urban and rural schools, particularly as she compares what she is observing in her school now with what she experienced at a deep rural school:

When I went to (\*\*\*\*) High School, I spoke in [emphasis] English. However, I found that there are students who are not understanding me, at all [emphasis]. So I had to resort to Patwa, and they understood me then. Because they were not exposed to the English language.

**Sandra** has been teaching Spanish for eleven years in different regions in Jamaica. Her experience includes urban and rural schools in Kingston, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth. She is currently teaching Spanish at a school that is exclusively for women. Sandra showed a lot of passion during her interview, particularly about the language that she calls “Jamaican”, and which she considers her “Mother Tongue”. Sandra has obviously studied linguistics because she was very precise with her terminology, particularly with the term “Creole”<sup>90</sup>, a point of difference with the other participants, who used the term *patwa* to describe the language. During her interview, Sandra showed her political stance with respect to matters concerning the language of Jamaica. Her working experience in five different schools in Jamaica has facilitated her vision of the developments in foreign language teaching in, as well as the intricacies regarding the socio-economic categorization of Jamaican schools (see discussion in Chapter III).

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<sup>90</sup> The term Creole was proposed by linguists Le Page e Tabouret-Keller in 1982. However, Jamaicans continue to use the popular name *Patwa* (MÜHLEISEN, 2002:72).

#### **4.4. Interviews**

The interview process was an essential aspect for attaining the overarching goal sought through this research. It may be argued that interviews are ideal tools for exploring narratives, as they generate rich first-hand information, as well as the advantage of being in direct contact with participants and their contextual reality. The process started with a first semi-structured interview round that provided valuable data. However, given the nature of this cartographic research, such data brought forth further issues that became drivers for further discussions in a second interview round.

##### **4.4.1. First Round of Interviews: General (semi-structured) guiding questions:**

- 1) Do you agree or disagree with the assertion that Jamaica Creole is an essential language for Jamaicans? Is it also essential for teaching/learning of Spanish in Jamaica?
- 2) Do you consider your Creole speaking students as bilingual individuals? Does that facilitate or hinder their learning and your teaching of Spanish?
- 3) Would you depart from Creole grammatical and lexical aspects to teach Spanish; or you prefer to use English? Why?
- 4) Do you think your status as Creole speaker helps you to be a more effective Spanish teacher?
- 5) In your opinion, how does the Spanish curriculum (both at a school and at a national level) reflect Jamaica's language situation? (Or not?)
- 6) In your opinion, how does orality and Creole grammar facilitate or hinder the teaching and learning of Spanish?

##### **4.4.2. Second Round of Interviews: Personal (unstructured) conversations**

The first round of interviews was quite informative, as it allowed creating a substantial map based on the personal perspectives communicated by the participating Spanish teachers in regards to their perceptions of Jamaican Creole and its connection (or lack thereof) with their teaching practices. The researcher observed a generalized acceptance of the importance of Jamaican Creole, as a dominant language for everyday interaction among most Jamaicans, and as one having an impact on the teaching and learning of Spanish. However, as the process unfolded, it became more evident that there was a need for further discussion on language conceptions, in order to get a better understanding of the ambivalence observed among some

participants. Developing a second round of interviews seemed like a feasible instrument to further on such discussions, but the researcher opted for unstructured conversations, instead of semi-structured interviews; not only because it seemed a more suitable way of interacting with some of the original participants, but also because of the status of the new participants.

Unstructured conversations allowed enhancing the knowledge created about the narratives shared by the participating Spanish teachers, as most of them took advantage of the opportunity to expound on their ideas about the matter in question. The new course taken during this Second Round was also enriched by the inputs of the new participants, namely representatives of the Ministry of Education and leading academic institutions. These persons, who kindly volunteered their time and ideas, presented priceless points of view based on their academic experience, and as professionals with perspectives facilitated by their position of authority at the Ministerial level.

#### **4.5. Participant's Narratives.**

The cartographic exploration of the targeted field led to the processing and interpretation of data that, after generated, allowed creating a narrative map about the most prevailing, either shared or collective, views of the Jamaican Creole speakers who participated in the process. Such narrative map has resulted from narratives that are regarded as building blocks of a major overriding story and as “fundamental structures [based on] versions of personal experiences” (LABOV & WALETZKY, 1997, p. 3).

Therefore, participants' contributions detailed below were seen as narratives or stories that, when filtered through the observant eyes (and mind) of the cartographer/researcher, became fragments within a multiplicity of narratives showing “conceptions and histories about the world” (MEHL-MADRONA & MAINGUY, Blog, 2016), about the participants themselves, their profession, and their country, Jamaica. The discussion below is based on the participants' stories, which the author has interpreted as “metaphorical attitudes” (HYVÄRINEN, 2006, p. 31) concerning their conceptions, perceptions, ways and practices, as well as their ability “to make decisions, to create change and [to explain their] lives” (MADRONA & MAINGUY, Blog, 2016). It may be suitable to consider the discussion presented and the narrative map generated herein as narratives bearing rhizomatic complexities that involve a multiplicity of worldviews, perceptions and conceptions.

#### 4.5.1. Narratives around Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English

Most of the Participants exhibited a positive attitude towards Jamaican Creole. Mariposa's views were interesting in this regard because, despite having grown up in a Creole speaking environment, she considers that Jamaican Creole (which she calls *Patwa* all the time) "is not a language". Nonetheless, it was interesting to hear her say that she prefers to use Jamaican to express her innermost emotions and that she associates it with her motherland, Jamaica, whenever she is travelling. Mariposa's view of a language as a set of grammar rules rather than a vehicle for expressing the inner world of speakers appeared also in other interviews, like Kent's understanding that Jamaican Creole is not a language "according to the books".

A point worth noticing was the name these speakers used to describe the language they speak. The name *Patwa* generally involves different points of reference<sup>91</sup>. For most Jamaicans, the name *Patwa* is just the name of their language, without those other connotations alluded by MUFUWENE (1997):

Mufwene (1997:39) suggests that "the negative connotations associated with the terms also explain how they have alternated with the other negatively-charged term, *patois*, used in French (and borrowed in English) also for 'regional rural/provincial variety of language'. He sees the continuation of the low esteem associated with Creole languages as arising from this choice of term. As another implication in the designation "Creole" and "Patois" he identifies the "acknowledged connection with the lexifiers." This becomes particularly important when the term forms one element of a compound of the name of the language (e.g. Belizean Creole, Guyanese Creole). It is striking that, in the Caribbean orbit, this applies mainly to those languages which have been in a continued contact situation with their lexifier (MÜHLEISEN, 2002. P. 71-72).

However, linguists tend to avoid the term "patwa" because it is a borrowing from the French *Patois*, a word whose origin was characterized by a diminishing and negatively loaded connotation<sup>92</sup>. During the interviews, however, most Participants used (quite proudly) the word *patwa* to name the language they speak. This use of the word *patwa* in Jamaica may be

<sup>91</sup> "Jamaica is considered a bilingual society (Alleyne 1989; Shields 1989), the two dominant forms of language being Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English. SJE, the official language, is used in formal settings. Symbolising high status and prestige, it is, however, the language of a small minority. Jamaican Creole, the language of the overwhelming majority of the descendants of slaves, has traditionally had little status, no acceptability in official and formal contexts, and is commonly referred to as Patois, the French term for a low-status dialect". (Educational Language Policy, 2001, p. 7).

<sup>92</sup> The negative connotation can be found in the dictionary definition: (a) A regional dialect, especially one without a literary tradition. **b.** Nonstandard speech. **2.** The special jargon of a group; cant. [French, from Old French, *incomprehensible or crude speech, local dialect*, from *patoier*, *to gesticulate (like one unable to speak)*, *speak crudely*, from *pate, paw*, from Vulgar Latin *\*patta*, *probably originally imitative of the sound of one object striking another, such as the footfall of an animal*. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/patois>

compared to the use of the word *criollo* in Spanish speaking Caribbean countries like Cuba, where the term is used to describe typical cultural traditions. Both terms have been often devoid of their original negative connotations, and have been incorporated to the regular language stock of speakers. Hence, given the fact that the term *patwa* has been generally accepted, it would be useless to try and contest its use among speakers. When it comes to speakers' use, it is fair to bear in mind the proposal in MCKEON (1946, p. 195) that language has "many uses to which it has been put by man and many purposes which it may serve, and although these uses have as natural basis the properties and effects of language, its meanings are determined by habit and convention".

Such habit and convention concerning the use of the term *patwa* by most Jamaicans was observed in the process of interviews. It seems as if Jamaican Creole users have, in practice, reached a consensus in naming the language form they use. Such is also the case of Mariposa, despite her ambivalence in recognising that Jamaican Creole is "essential" to Jamaicans because it is widely used on the island, but cannot be used when teaching Spanish, because she believes it lacks the "adequate grammatical structures" to establish a comparison with "universal languages" like Spanish and English.

In this regard, the interview process led the researcher towards the feeling that, in order to ascertain perceptions amongst participants in relation to Jamaican Creole and its impact on the teaching and learning of Spanish, it would be relevant to achieve a broader understanding about participants' concepts of language, based on the assumption that those concepts are part and parcel of the entire perceptual experience and they may have an influence on the participants' teaching choices. As the interview process evolved, there was a growing belief that many Jamaicans, like Mariposa, are aware of the overwhelming presence of Jamaican Creole in the island but continue to affirm that it is not a language. Hence, upon conclusion of the first interview round, it was understood that it would be valid to engage participants in a deeper discussion in regards to language conceptions; which constituted the second interview round (unstructured conversations).

#### **4.5.2. Standard Jamaican English is the language of education.**

Participants are aware that, despite the prevalent use of Jamaican Creole by their students (most of them considered as Creole native speakers because they have grown up in a Creole speaking context and because the language is used for practically every relevant moment of their lives), all of them have to conclude their Secondary Education with Regional Exams; which are set in Standard English. The results they achieve in those exams heavily determine their future, since passing grades are required to enter the universities and achieve

professional qualifications, which are tantamount to attaining good paying jobs. Failure to pass those exams, therefore, will automatically place them in a position of social disadvantage; with the sole possibility of aspiring to low-paying jobs, and all the other consequences obtained in a class-oriented society, where prestige and social standing are primarily determined by a person's wealth.

The above resonates amongst most participants, as they claim that, even when they resort to Jamaican Creole to introduce and clarify some aspects of their Spanish lessons, or to present typological comparisons between Creole and Spanish with the aim of attaining a better understanding on the part of their learners, or to enhance the knowledge acquired, at the end of the process, they feel compelled to return to English, the language of education. Such methodological procedure results in more work during their lessons; not only because they are using three languages in one lesson, repeating the explanations in those 3 languages, but also because, in some cases, those teachers end up actually teaching Spanish and English at the same time:

MAVERICK: Because most of the other subjects, the teachers are required to... to bring the concepts across to them eventually in English and the students are encouraged to develop the ability to speak English if they have to represent themselves or the school in different settings. And so, we don't want a case where is either Creole or Spanish. They must all so still be able to use their, uhmmm... their native language and the text books that are used, the texts books don't have the Creole in them, and so the English experience is still very alive. So the Creole is used because is their experience. The textbooks, the concepts are explained using English and so, if we jump over one, it will cause a little bit of confusion for the students who are still being encouraged in the other classes to be able to use English and so the concepts are moving from Creole to Spanish to English to make them comfortable at what is being said and then you tie it with Spanish.

MARIA: Two things then. Those textbooks were written in Jamaica or they are from abroad?<sup>93</sup>

MAVERICK: Abroad. (PERSONAL INTERVIEW).

Maverick's statement confirms an observed narrative shared among participants in regards to the need of using Creole strategically in a Spanish lesson, to present and achieve an understanding of the Spanish contents; as well as the need to revert to Standard English once comprehension is achieved. Additionally, it would be suitable to refer to an observable disparity resulting from the fact that, the language of instruction is not, in fact, the official language postulated by the Ministry of Education, nor the language used in textbooks. As observed by the researcher and reported by participants, many textbooks are written and published abroad, therefore aiming at international audiences. Such situation contributes to the

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<sup>93</sup> I included my input in some excerpts to show how such an interactional context may work as a constructive exchange that helps shape and orient the discussion (TALMY, 2010:137).

complexity of the matter; given the fact that the linguistic and cultural approach presented by foreign authors clearly differs from the linguistic and cultural reference of most Jamaican learners.

In this regard, it was observed that all participants, except for Kent, alluded to the fact that there is not an explicit institutional language policy stipulating the use of English in class nor in school compounds. However, the teachers stated that they are “encouraged” to use English because, being the Official Language of Education, students must write their exams in English.

There isn't a policy. The teachers are encouraged to exercise language flexibility, because English is the language of commerce. It is encouraged that we use it to communicate to the students, but we find that because of the background of the students, you might have to impart a particular content to them, you might have to, you know, switch to the Creole in order to get the concept across to them and then repeat it in English, but there's not a policy in the school that says "you must speak English". It is encouraged because it is the so called "the mother tongue", but, when you take into consideration the makeup of the students, then there can't be a policy that says "Creole should not be used" because it's part of the students existence, their upbringing, and so it is essential in their understanding what is being taught. (MAVERICK, Personal Interview).

It is interesting to note, notwithstanding, that at Kent's school there is, in fact, a tacitly established institutional language policy:

Yes. There's a policy that says "students should relate to teacher in English, and teacher should teach in English", however I find, I value that policy often times, but not no to trod on the policy, but rather to get the students to understand then we can revert to the policy standards. So in explaining a... a theory or concept I'll use Creole. They understand it better. (KENT, Personal Interview).

There is an obvious contradiction in this case, due to the fact that the institution has established a language policy which imposes the use of English, despite that, according to Kent, close to 65% of the student population belong to Creole-speaking families and communities:

Their parents don't speak English, their parents' friends don't speak English, and the community doesn't speak English. If you find a professional in the community speaking English, he or she has to use Creole, in order to get them to understand. So, especially for those people who live in the deep rural community, so, English is seen as really, a foreign language, and they hardly, uhm... based on my observation, you rarely find a student meaning to construct... a sentence or an idea, using Standard English (KENT, Personal Interview).

Kent's assertion helps reaffirm the premise regarding the prevalence of Jamaican Creole; including within educational institutions. Such prevalence may explain the observed

inconsistency in connection with language institutional policies, particularly those aimed at regulating the use of Jamaican Creole. It is a fact that, institutions, as well as teachers, are compelled to support students as much as they possibly can, so that they can pass regional exams such as CXC and CAPE (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Exam); which are the ultimate determinant for them to have access to tertiary education; thus paving the way for accessing better-paying jobs and a stable future financial situation, with the added value of the prestigious social position associated with the educated citizens of Jamaica.

In this regard, MAVERICK also underlined the need of using English during Spanish lessons, even when there is no requirement to do so. In his opinion, teachers should understand that they must “try to develop *their*<sup>94</sup> English” (MAVERICK). Hence, even when most of the participating teachers use Jamaican Creole during their Spanish lessons, it is a fact that they are aware of the importance English has for their students’ success in life. Regarding the use of Creole in his Spanish lessons, KENT stated:

I'm undecided in that. I understand Creole. I've mastered Creole and I've mastered English... Ummm... Standard English... but I understand though that students need to master Standard English. So, it's not no to get them to think that I'm using it, so they can use Creole. I stick to Standard English as much as possible. And even if I use it to explain a concept I revert... to Standard English, so that they know that there's a precedence being set here. They need to speak in Standard English. (KENT, Personal Interview).

The observed perceptions in relation to the relevance of Standard Jamaican English as the language of education, as opposed to the prevalence of Jamaican Creole as a language of instruction, have a precedent explicitly illustrated in the Language Policy of the Jamaican Ministry of Education & Youth:

Informed by reviews of research on policy options, and on language and literacy acquisition in second language learning environments, the MOEY&C [Ministry of Education & Youth] has adopted a policy position which recognizes Jamaica as a bilingual country. It retains SJE [Standard Jamaican English] as the official language and advocates the policy option which promotes oral use of the home language in schools, while facilitating the development of skills in SJE. Within this option, emphasis is placed on the employment of bilingual teaching strategies, particularly at the early primary level and again at the early secondary level where numerous language and literacy needs are also manifested. (MOEY, 2001, p. 4).

The statements above encase the language perception of many Jamaicans. Such stand was widespread in 2001, when the Ministry of Education was forced to public the Jamaica

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<sup>94</sup> Maverick’s emphasis.



Language Education Policy, which – as can be seen in the quote above – stipulated the use of the “home language in schools” (p.20). Though bold, such step was just a mild solution, however, as the stipulation clearly described “Standard Jamaican English as the official language” and the promotion of the “oral use” of Jamaican Creole had the sole purpose of “facilitating the development of skills in SJE” (p.20). Such policy statement shows the Ministry of Education has not actually diverted from thinking styles that categorize and impose Standard Jamaican English as an “official” language; despite that no such rank is explicitly expressed in the Constitution of Jamaica(1962).

It is worthy of note, in this regard, that the Ministry of Education grants Jamaican Creole the rank of “home language”, thus establishing “the place” this language has in students’ lives, that is, a language mostly used in informal contexts, amongst friends and families. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education has been compelled to acknowledge that Jamaican Creole has, indeed, a value and a relevance in the learning process, since there is an undeniable link between the extensive use of Jamaican Creole and the “unsatisfactory performance of students in language and literacy at all levels of the Jamaican educational system, and its accompanying effects on language competence and on the potential for human development in the wider society” (MOEY, 2001, p.4).

Participants also referred to the situation described above, especially because there is an obvious gap between the contents, which are taught and examined in Standard English, and the students’ vastly Creole-speaking linguistic reality, on the other hand. Seemingly, the Ministry of Education proposed bilingual approach has the aim of closing the annoying gap existing in the students’ learning processes, whilst attempting to maintain Standard Jamaican English as the ultimate language of education, and the mark of an educated individual.

It is also worth mentioning, the skilful manner in which the Ministry avoids recurring to technical linguistic terminology; particularly when defining Jamaican Creole. It appears that the term “home language” encases their vision about that language as an essential one for Jamaicans. The Ministry of Education move of designing a language policy that takes into consideration the need to use Jamaican Creole for literacy purposes may be interpreted as a recognition on the part of the MOE that Jamaican Creole is, in fact, the mother tongue of most Jamaicans, a point reaffirmed in the description of Jamaica as a “bilingual nation” and the reference to difficulties in the learning of English:

Although Jamaica is described as a bilingual country with Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC) being the two languages in operation, the fluid nature of language use between these languages, as well as the peculiar nature of the

linguistic relationship they share, creates difficulties for the majority of Creole speakers learning English. (MOEY, 2001, p. 4).

So, it is clear that there is a peculiar language situation in Jamaica, and that there is a matter of bilingualism<sup>95</sup> that has an impact on language teaching and learning, resulting from the fact that contents are to be taught and tested in Standard English, the language officially established as Official by the MOE, while most Jamaicans are growing within a different linguistic context, mostly that of Jamaican Creole. As a result, bound by MOE policy and the demands of socio-educational reality, participants perceive they are obligated to use Jamaican Creole as the language of instruction and Standard Jamaican English as the language to achieve official educational goals.

#### **4.5.3. Jamaican Creole is the Mother Tongue of most learners.**

According to the interviewed participants, most of their students feel a stronger emotional attachment with Jamaican Creole than with Standard English. Likewise, as seen in the previous section, they seem to believe that their students achieve a better understanding of Spanish language concepts and notions when Jamaican Creole is used to carry out explanations, or as a point of departure for typological comparisons. They claim that when Standard English is used, a significant part of comprehension is lost. Most participating Spanish teachers are of the opinion that their students prefer to be taught in Jamaican Creole:

There should be a balance, using all three of them, Creole, English and Spanish. Because there are some persons who understand English in English terms that might be used, there are some persons who could not understand, so those persons who understand Creole, you have to ensure that you teach them in Creole so they can get what you're saying. (KEISHA, Personal Interview).

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<sup>95</sup> Some linguists have brought into the discussion the label of “diglossic” to refer to the linguistic situation of Jamaica. According to FERGUSON (1959), Diglossia is applied to “speech communities [with] two or more varieties of the same language used by some speakers under different conditions [...] many speakers speak their local dialect at home or among family or friends of the same dialect area but use the standard language in communicating with speakers of other dialects or on public occasions” (FERGUSON, 1959: 236). Such statement could have been true in 1959, when little was known about the history and features of Jamaican Creole; but, a closer look at the current Jamaican linguistic situation (in 2016), will show significant phonological, lexical and grammatical differences between Jamaican Creole and Jamaican Standard English. There is also the plausible argument that Jamaican Creole and Jamaican Standard English are not *exactly* two varieties of the same language, since in both languages there are significant aspects derived from African languages (Akan, Igbo, Fula, among others). Diglossia seems to be a term that does not set easily with most of the so-called Creole languages, as shown by DEJEAN (1983): “One is forced to conclude that the classic example of diglossia, the Haitian situation, is the enfant terrible who calls into question the validity of the concept [...] instead of inventing a word like 'diglossia', we should have retained the term 'bilingualism'. This would cover all possibilities, and would have made it unnecessary to try to set up a classification based on a simplistic dichotomy (DEJEAN, 1983). I would agree that such analogy works perfectly for Jamaican Creole, as well.

They understand it better. They are able to say... They are able to relate to it faster than if I say to them in English. Because for me, to decode English takes some processing, and they might get lost in words, so I find if I say it in Creole, then they are able to relate to it faster and might even get it better [...]. It's their mother tongue. (KENT).

It is Creole. I have to tie in a lot of what I teach to what they know it to be in Creole, nothing so much in English, you start up with the Creole you link the Creole to the English and say "this is what is being said in Spanish, from the everyday conversation. (MAVERICK).

This situation reaches higher preponderance in the case of teachers who work in rural areas and poor and inner-city communities, where students are mostly Creole speakers; thus facing a severe challenge when conducting lessons in Standard English. Those teachers are forced to resort to Jamaican Creole to conduct their lessons; except that the reversal to Standard English proves at times a difficult, if not impossible, task; on account of the deficient proficiency many students have in Standard Jamaican English:

Naturally, I did not use Creole because I was brought up not to use it, so when I went there<sup>96</sup> I was using English. But then, when I found that my students weren't understanding at all I resorted, against the school policy, to use Patwa, then I went back to the English. So I was using 3 languages (MIKA, Personal Interview).

Later on, MIKA deepens on her response affirming that:

Some of those problems, in terms that there are times when you have to make reference to the Creole, for them to get the Spanish rather than the English, because, if you keep referring to the English, especially when it's some sentence structures like *are* and *is*, you find the students can't make the connection. The same way you have irregular verbs in English, they do not know that *to be* is an irregular verb and the same thing transfers in Spanish, they don't really know that. So most times you have to go back to, say, use the Creole to justify the Spanish rather than using the English to justify it (MIKA, Personal Interview).

It may be accurate to gather from the Participants' statements, hence, that they seem to perceive having an institutional language policy that provides a framework for the use of Standard Jamaican English at the expense of students learning as an act that militates, not only against the teaching/learning process, but also against foreign language teaching and learning as well.

I think it needs to be relaxed in order to help the teachers get the concepts to the students clearer and more efficiently. I do understand and appreciate the policies about Standard English, but then, sometimes they don't get it in Standard English, and I find that going to Creole and allowing them to assimilate that concept, and then revert to the same explanation in English, then it would help. So, I think it would be necessary for them to... uhm... review that policy, to allow for the incorporation of creole so as to enhance the concepts (KENT, Personal Interview).

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<sup>96</sup> Mika is referring to Cambridge High School, located in rural Montego Bay.

The opinions expressed by the interviewed teachers in that regard coincide with the findings of a research conducted by the Jamaica Language Unit (JLU) in 2005. Such research concluded that classes conducted in the two languages (Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English) have better results than those where English is used as the sole language of instruction (JLU SURVEY, 2005, p. 9). JLU research presented statistics proving the positions in relation to the use of Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English within educational institutions, with 71.1% of Participants favouring the use of Jamaican Creole against a 28.9% that defended an English-only teaching procedure (JLU SURVEY, 2005, p. 32).

The perceptions uncovered during this research process presented an even richer context for Spanish classes, given that the presence of three languages (Jamaican Creole, Standard Jamaican English and Spanish) in lessons practically become “contact zones” (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p. 26), where students and teachers use the three languages “collaboratively [to] construct meaning for semiotic resources which they are borrowing from diverse languages and symbol systems” (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p. 27). In this regard, it may be pertinent to bring forth a consideration of such situation from two different perspectives. On the one hand, and continuing with the proposal in CANAGARAJAH (2013), the “contact zone” created during Spanish classes may be seen as advantageous “translingual” practices; resulting from the smooth and natural transition from one language form to another, as teachers and students make use of all available resources to develop the teaching and learning process. All participating Spanish teachers reported how they use the three languages to develop their lessons; which seems like a valuable moment to see language diversity, not as “hierarchically and segregated” forms, but as an opportunity to foster a paradigm shift in language teaching aimed at understanding how “languages relate to each other in fluid ways and, therefore, become more hybrid in form” (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p. 26).

The disadvantage of such practice, on the other hand, relates to fact that Jamaican teachers are bound by a regulatory framework, namely the MOE Education Language Policy and the curricular guidelines, that imposes traditional language teaching “models based on fix systems [and] grammatical competence” (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p. 26). Such regulations compel Spanish teachers to have their students learn established phonetic, lexical and grammatical patterns of particular languages. Teachers feel responsible for their students learning of such patterns, so that they can be successful in their examinations.

It may be argued that, such observance of regulations may be a defining factor of the common practice (as observed and reported by participants) of delving into theoretical and

grammatical aspects of Spanish using Jamaican Creole, and then bringing in Standard Jamaican English, mostly by way of grammatical comparisons. Hence, rather than a *translingual* practice, it seems more like a *triangular* approach, whereby each language is segregated to a particular angle and seen as a static and finite phenomenon. This discussion is far from suggesting that language specific aspects, such as its grammatical structure, are to be discarded; but it may be fitting to reconsider the way in which grammar is used for language teaching purposes.

However, the practice-based perspective doesn't mean that the other competing constructs, such as form/grammar, structure system, community, and cognition are disregarded. They have a role to play in translingual practice, but they don't remain autonomous and primary, nor do they have the same roles and definitions as in traditional models. They are redefined and reconfigured according to practice-based perspectives. (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p. 27).

A translingual approach, hence, would involve the consideration that language forms are not static: speakers adjust, accommodate and transform the language as the context requires (a fact easily observable in Modern Languages<sup>97</sup>). Seen as a triangular practice, the teaching of Spanish in the Jamaican context may be cumbersome, based on the amount of effort and time a teacher has to invest to get the content across. It was refreshing, however, to witness participants' optimism in this regard:

MARIA: Isn't that hard?

MIKA: No.

MARIA: It wasn't hard for you? How did you manage to have 3 languages in one class?

MIKA: Cause I took my time and explained. So I said right now I'm gonna be speaking in Patwa, spoke the Patwa, then I went back to English, then I went to the Spanish, then I went back to the Patwa, then I went to English, then I went to the Spanish.

MARIA: So. That means that the school should have to pay you twice, because you were teaching Spanish and English at the same time.

MIKA: Oh. Ok (smiles). (MIKA, Personal Interview).

Mika's optimism was also expressed by other Participants, who feel concentrating in the task of teaching Spanish supersedes any lingering on the extra-efforts they need to put in:

Well, it is our job, and it's tiring at times, but we have to look beyond the tiredness and try as much as possible to see how many lives we can touch with our teaching.

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<sup>97</sup> Many Spanish grammatical structures as seen in Cervantes's *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the most celebrated literary creation of Spanish literature, have become obsolete, and the book practically needs a translation to Modern Spanish. Similarly, younger English speaking readers have a hard time following Shakespeare's writings.

We may not reach everybody, but we have to try and reach the majority if we intend for them to continue. (DANE, Personal Interview).

It's a lot of work, but as a teacher, it should continue to develop... develop me as a teacher, because the aim is to eventually get the students to understand what you are trying to teach them. Then we accept this challenge, this is the student situation. Not about me and what I know, but how I get this content across to the students. And what it forces us to do is to sit down and plan with all of these things in mind. Do I just go to the class and speak English? And if I do that, will my students understand? Do I use Creole first? And when I get the sense that they understand Creole, then I say "You know, this is what is being said in English, this is the Spanish version of it". So, it is a lot of work, but I wouldn't have it any other way, because I know what the situation for each learner in the room is. It would be easier if I just had an environment where just English to Spanish, but because I don't think about me, the outcome is the learning outcome. So, it's a lot of work, but wouldn't have it any other way. (MAVERICK, Personal Interview).

#### **4.5.4. Jamaican Creole prevails in rural areas and poor urban communities.**

This is a widely shared perception among Participants. At some point in their teaching career, they have been exposed to the linguistic reality of rural or inner-city schools, what made them shift their methodological approach to the teaching of Spanish.

Well. Because the school that I'm from, the school that I originally worked at was mostly... it was a poor community. Students that came there, they didn't know how to express themselves. So, there were times of course when I had to draw on my Patwa, speak to them in Patwa, and of course the principal, she spoke to them in Patwa. (MARIPOSA).

Statements along this line were regularly expressed during interviews, and participants agreed that in such situations the wisest approach was to use Jamaican Creole in order to adjust to a linguistic reference clearly different from that of urban schools:

It has to do with the exposure of the students. You know, it's an urban setting, persons are more exposed to different people, to different nationalities. With a rural school, it's more secluded and persons are not that exposed to different people, so that's what happens. (MIKA, Personal Interview).

Despite being personal perceptions expressed by the participating Jamaican Spanish teachers, those criteria concerning the issue of urban and rural differentiation seem to be grounded on a shared concern.

If I had to quantify, I would say most, about 65 per cent come from the deep rural farming communities. These people depend on farming for their livelihood, and then another 30-35 per cent would come from these areas, where they are born in some of our upscale, lower mid-class family, residential, with no farming influences [...] As a result, their exposure to English, their parents don't speak English, their parents' friends don't speak English, the community doesn't speak English. If you find a professional in the community speaking English, he or she has to use Creole, in order

to get them to understand. So, especially for those people who live in a deep rural community. So, English is seen as really, a foreign language, and they hardly, uhm... based on my observation, you rarely find a student meaning to construct a sentence or an idea, using Standard English. (KENT, Personal Interview).

KENT's perception about Standard English being closer to a foreign language to many students was also echoed in other interviews:

I would say that probably about 80 per cent of the student population speak Creole, because the majority of the students are from St. Elizabeth, and many of them speak the different versions of the Creole (MAVERICK, Personal Interview)

According to most, if not all, Participants there is an obvious gap between urban and rural schools, particularly deep rural schools. The discussion with DANE delved on this striking difference:

DANE: Yes. The students there were more linguistically....Here, they are more linguistically inclined and they are more alert to the teaching of foreign language. In Winston Jones they were not so. They could not see the reason why they were learning a foreign language and in addition to that, some of those students could not read, so they could not make the transition from English to Spanish...

MARIA: They can't read... at all, or they can't read English?

DANE: They just can't.

MARIA: But they are in high school! So, please, educate me, I cannot understand that!

DANE: There are students who can't read at all.

MARIA: Oh, my! So what kind of community is that? What kind of community is the one that surrounds the school?

DANE: It's a rural....Yes. Deep rural. And I mean, you know Mandeville is rural, but you have rural, and then you have deep rural<sup>98</sup>.

The discussion above involves considerations that transcend the language issue, per se. It speaks to socioeconomic differentiation and poor learning outcomes, first and foremost. It is also a reference to the gap that Participants perceive as existing between some urban and rural schools. Participants' statements in this regard may be linked to the traditional school placement in Jamaica, based on students' choices according to their results in the National Examinations known as GSAT (Grade Six Achievement Test). In an effort to curve some of the problems caused by remote placements, in 2016 the Ministry of Education informed that:

The Ministry of Education is cognizant of the many challenges facing parents whose children have to attend schools that are far from where they live. Among the concerns

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<sup>98</sup> I included my participation to show how such an interactional context may work as a constructive exchange that helps shape and orient the discussion (TALMY, 2010:137).

are the availability and cost of transportation as well as the cost of lunch. These factors sometimes limit children's attendance to three days per week. Schools also have been concerned about how students' learning is affected by absenteeism. In order to alleviate these factors the Ministry of Education is committed to the manual placement in schools near their homes of GSAT students who are not assigned to any of the institutions of their choice. In addition, parents and guardians are reminded that where students have been assigned to schools far from their homes, the Ministry will facilitate requests for transfers. (MOE SITE, 2016).

The move by the Ministry of Education aimed at resolving long standing issues pertaining to school absenteeism, with its accompanying implications, a problem hitherto commonly found in rural schools, and which may be a factor of negative impact on students' learning.

As I was saying in my introduction not many parents rush to send their children to school. It's a school known for... poor students. "Dunce", it's a Patwa word meaning "not right", and the population was so very bad. Sometimes you had only 10 students per class. So, it is different here at Manchester High. Even when it rains and pours you find students coming to school from St. Elizabeth, Trelawney, Clarendon, wherever, because they want an education and when they come, you give them the best, you give them what the school requires, what the minister of education requires. It is different in every regard (MARIPOSA, Personal Interview).

In response to the concerns expressed above, the MOE is currently promoting the implementation of changes in order to “enhance the quality of those high schools that traditionally have not been institutions of choice, by way of improved infrastructure, expanded curriculum offerings, better trained principals and teachers as well as welfare to students” (MOE SITE, 2016).

#### **4.5.5. Jamaican Creole is essential to most Jamaicans.**

According to the participating teachers, being Mother Tongue to most Jamaicans, Jamaican Creole contributes to better understanding the contents being presented in lessons. As discussed above, Participants stated that there is a predominance of Jamaican Creole in rural areas; but they also pointed out its extended use in inner-city communities. This reasoning brings to the fore an observable fact concerning socioeconomic distribution in Jamaica, showing that rural and inner-city communities are, by and large, areas where the most impoverished citizens reside. It would be a bit discomfoting to believe that there is an association between language use and socioeconomic situation, or that Jamaican Creole is “poor people language” (FOSTER-ALLEN, Personal Interview). Such matter definitely needs a deeper study, but Participants' statements alongside cartographic observations lead to an understanding that Jamaican Creole has a wider social use nowadays, as it can be heard beyond rural and inner-city impoverished areas and as far and above as tertiary educational institutions,



Parliamentary debates, and mass media productions. This fact may have led most of the Participants to define themselves as bilinguals.

Conversely, when discussing this issue, some participants stated that many of their students are not actually bilinguals. According to KENT, only around 35% of his students are bilinguals, the rest “are monolingual Creole speakers”. A very strong assertion considering that Jamaica is known as an Anglophone territory, a fact expressly belied if due consideration is given to some participants’ assertions.

It [Jamaican Creole] is essential. I would say it is essential because even though in the high schools or even in the primary prep schools English is promoted, in the communities, (Creole) is what the children hear around them. So, a lot of the culture is passed on through the Creole, many of their experiences is through the Creole as well. Their grasp, that’s how they express themselves, and so, it is essential. Only up to a point where we think we are able to eradicate it, could we consider it’s not essential, as long as it is there to the degree to which it is there (MAVERICK, Personal Interview).

Not only is Jamaican Creole essential because, as participants have stated, it is the language in which their students communicate, but it is also the language that facilitates the learning process. According to DANE, instruction becomes more effective because, by flowing naturally through the acts of speaking, learners can be engaged more easily:

I think it’s very special in Jamaica. One, we don’t have to provide formal training for our children to adopt Creole or speak Creole. It comes naturally, unlike English, where you have to spend a lot of time correcting them, trying to get them to use the language. The Creole is what they use **mostly**<sup>99</sup>. In any situation they don’t have to think to use Creole. (DANE, Personal Interview).

But Sandra deepens on the matter even further by stressing the frustration caused by a teaching/learning process in Standard Jamaican English, instead of using their “Mother Tongue”, Jamaican Creole:

I think English is what we are **forced**<sup>100</sup> to speak and that is why it gets a lot of resistance when you go to school, because the reality is that Creole captures everything we want to say. Whatever I’m saying to you here now, I could have easily said in Creole without there being a lack. So, when you tell me that I have to do English in high school, and all my subjects have to sit in English, it kind of feels like a punishment somewhat, and it feels as if you are degrading what I know, what my parents speak. You correct me and the tendency is to say “Speak properly”. So, when I speak Creole and you tell me “speak properly” it means something is wrong with the language I have been speaking even though [...] well, it’s what I grew up hearing. My neighbours spoke to me in Creole. My own parents spoke to me in Creole [...]

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<sup>99</sup> Dane’s emphasis.

<sup>100</sup> Sandra’s emphasis.

the jokes that you hear, the jokes that you tell, the riddles you hear they are in Creole, and when you try to put them in English they lose their meaning (SANDRA, Personal Interview).

Based on Sandra's contribution, it may be argued that:

- a) Jamaican Creole, *home language* of most Jamaicans, contains all the required formal and expressive material to suffice speakers' communication needs;
- b) Sitting exams in English causes a burden for Jamaican learners;
- c) The command "Speak properly" is associated with "speak in Standard English", and it can be interpreted as a move to diminish the value of Jamaican Creole;

The ideas considered above point to an underlying narrative around the importance of Jamaican Creole as a language that most Jamaicans deem essential, not just because it is a mark of their identity but also because it is, in fact, the primary thought reference for many. Such narrative counteracts against the narrative of many who discard Jamaican Creole as a language based on a notion that only considers external and perceivable (sounds, words and structural) language forms. They seem to be caught up in the thinking mode underlying "language invention" (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007); hence their asserting that Jamaican Creole "is not a language" because it lacks "the required structures" to stand a comparison with languages such as Spanish or English.

The ideas presented in Sandra's interview show the nature of Jamaican Creole as a "fluid set of mobile resources" (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p.21) available to speakers for any life purpose. Such notion may explain the apparent contradiction observed in some participants' opinions: they negate the technical definition of Jamaican Creole as a language; but, at the same time, acknowledge it is an "essential language for Jamaicans". So, it appears as if their instinct as speakers is stronger than traditional linguistic definitions of language. As speakers they are aware of that phenomenon, that allows them to negotiate all their "communication strategies" (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p.40), including the most cherished (with family) and the most enjoyable (jokes), as mentioned by Sandra in the quote above.

It may be suitable to bear in mind that language and thought are inseparable parts of the meaning-making process. If seen from this perspective, it may be easier to understand Sandra's concerns. Jamaican Creole involves the meaning-making and knowledge forming processes, resulting from the individual agency of its speakers; then sitting exams in Standard English has to be problematic; as Jamaican Creole users' learning mechanisms respond much better to formulations shaped in Jamaican Creole. Likewise, there is nothing as specific as a joke. People understand jokes because they derive from a shared form of wisdom, even when it could be

argued that joke interpretation would depend on each individual. But, if there is laughter, then the joke has not been wasted! Language is a collective creation, as it is shared by a community of speakers, and it appears as the external manifestation of individual referential thought.

#### **4.5.6. Jamaican Creole is and is not “a language”.**

The narrative about Jamaican Creole as an essential language for Jamaicans evinces through the use terms such as “Mother Tongue” to describe it. Nonetheless, participants seem to be having varying degrees of conviction when defining Jamaican Creole as a language. It was surprising to find such level of discrepancy among this participating cohort, most of whom are included in the age group 25 to 35, since it appears to contradict the 2005 JLU Attitude Survey findings:

Only age was significantly related to people’s view of whether or not Patwa is a language. There was no difference between the two youngest age groups, 82.6% of both these groups felt that Patwa is a language. The oldest age group of 51 years and older at 37, only 73.2% was less likely to think Patwa is a language. (JLU, 2005, p. 37).

One reflection derived from the comparison of both bodies of data is, perhaps, the random nature of the population sample in the Survey, as opposed to the targeted aspect of the participating cohort in this research. One could argue that, being language teachers, they seem to be more aware of the specificities surrounding a language definition, as shown by the criteria they used to illustrate their responses. Another plausible argument may be found in LANGENHOVE & HARRÉ (1994, p.367), indicating that there may be cases when “people will ‘use’ the appropriate idea in all situations where they have good reasons for doing so”, which leads to understanding that opinions, perceptions or criteria may bear multiple messages and multiple interpretations.

Several variables could be considered while contrasting the JLU data with the data generated during the interview process in the present research. It is no surprise that the age-group 50 years and older seems to be more convinced when affirming that Jamaican Creole is not a language. That generation reached maturity before the heated language debates and polemic discussions took over the Jamaican society. The participating cohort in this research, conversely, could have been influenced by the historical events related to the debates around Jamaican Creole which have been impacting Jamaican social thinking since the 1980’s. The other variable concerns the profession of the participating cohort, who in their interviews exposed the following standpoints:

- ❖ There is not a technical definition nor a regulatory framework, specifically stating that Jamaica Creole is or is not, in fact, a language.

Not based on the books, on the definition of the book, but if, for example, the government or the policy makers were to sit down and create the framework necessary for it to graduate from Creole to a language, then...yes! (KENT).

But, if given time, I think, once the policy makers come in and put in that framework, you say "ok"... to express an idea such as "him" or "her" you... [you know this that I'm saying], then, eventually It'll get there (KENT).

- ❖ Jamaican Creole is “too young” to be a language:

As I'm saying I don't know if it is because Creole is only about 50 years old. After independence that's when it really became rampant. It was in small pockets after slavery and so [...] you know that 50 years... But for now, no. But I do appreciate the value of Creole. Constantly, the students I meet daily, in expressing and teaching and interacting with them, Creole is very important to them (KENT).

- ❖ It is not a “universal” language

I find that languages should be universal. If I'm only speaking a language that my country only understand, it's not a language, and that's where I'm heading. We are the only ones in Jamaica who understand the Patwa language [...] I believe that if a country speaks only their language, it's not a universal language. So, that person would not be bilingual, if you only speak Patwa and English. That's my opinion [...] I find that patwa is not universal, and for somebody who has been to several countries, I find that the patwa language stops at the airport, and I appreciate it, but, it has its place (MARIPOSA)

MARIA: So, You will not classify Jamaican Creole as a language?

MIKA: It **is** a language, but a combination of different languages that make it up.

MARIA: So. What would be the difference between Jamaican Creole and Spanish, for example? Or English?

MIKA: [Thinking and smiling]... That's a hard question Maria.

MARIA: What do you mean, it's a hard question? 'Cause I really don't understand what you mean when you say it's a combination of different languages?

MIKA: But that's how we were taught.

MARIA: Ohhhh. How do **you** feel as a speaker?

MIKA: I don't think it is one language. You can see different aspects, like you say *pass mi buuk, mi pen, mi, mi, mi*. That's me, mine. That's... like Spanish, or *mi like the pen* having the same format as *me gusta la pluma*.

- ❖ There is lack of grammatical “structures” in Jamaican Creole comparable to more “universal” languages such as Spanish or English,

Generally now I do believe strongly that Patwa is not a real language. I mean, yes, it has its grammar. For example "one boy", as opposed to "boy dem", to make it plural.

Girl, "girl dem". Everything you add "dem" on to make something plural, but with English, I think English is the main language [...] I believe that when you do speak English and Spanish, you are bilingual, or English and French you are bilingual (MARIPOSA).

Well, there isn't a set Creole grammar or a set grammar structure for Creole (DANE).

Creole grammar is confusing to the students. If you try to explain, because you know Creole. Uhhh... *he* could be *she*, and *she* could be *he*, so that would just be one messy situation (KENT).

❖ There is remarkable language variation in Jamaican Creole:

Maybe you've heard, Creole in Kingston is different from Creole in Manchester, and Creole in Mandeville may be different from Creole in Malvern. It has so many influences, and so based on that then I would say no, but I know that there's a structure. (KENT).

Because then the beauty of the language would be lost if it's standardized. (MIKA).

❖ There is no standardized written form of Jamaican Creole:

People know what to say, when to say, probably the writing is where the problem is going to come, and the variations, you have to get a system to manage the variations. (KENT).

It was spoken in school, but it wasn't considered a language so to speak. It was just an oral thing. You speak it and that's it. There's no grammar. The books were not written in it. There were no stories told in it, except for Anancy Stories. But being and adult you realize that people are now exploring the fact that Patwa could be a language, based on the structure, as I pointed out earlier. Also [Carolyn] Cooper from the University of the West Indies. She's really pushing for the Patwa to be a language. (MARIPOSA).

❖ It is the "language of comfort" for Jamaicans:

Yes, I think so. I just felt at home, and it reminded me of when I was growing up. That was a language that for me, Patwa was a language of comfort. I never ever speak to my parents in English. I grew up speaking Patwa. It's a language of comfort. It's a language of laughter, but it's not formal [laughter] (MARIPOSA).

They relax, they don't feel pressured to think about grammar and correct pronunciation and as a result, they speak freely, and you get more of what they want to say, as they express themselves in the Creole (MAVERICK).

❖ It is a "culture" language:

In cultural expressions, it is kind a harder to use the English to explain the cultural expressions, because English, you could see is not really a part....because it is not our Mother Language, it's not really a part of us, so we have use Creole to bring forth the Spanish idiomatic expressions. (DANE)

There's no need to use Patwa, except like for cultural... exchange. (MARIPOSA)

I think it is essential, especially for the cultural transmission. (MAVERICK).

I would not suggest that we use Creole as an official language because every country they have their own Creole as a cultural language (DANE).

SANDRA: I have very high regard for Creole. There are some things you cannot express as richly as you want to in English because language is culture. You have to capture the culture of the people when you are talking. We have a tradition, I don't know if we still have that tradition, but when I was a child I used to hear a lot of Anancy stories, and when we went to high school and wanted to tell those stories in English they lost meaning totally.

MARIA: So, would you say that Creole is the cultural reflection of Jamaica?

SANDRA: It is.

MARIA: Instead of English?

SANDRA: It is. I think English is what we are forced to speak and that is why it gets a lot of resistance when you go to school, because the reality is that Creole captures everything we want to say. Whatever I'm saying to you here now, I could have easily said in Creole without there being a lack. So, when you tell me that I have to do English in high school and all my subjects have to sit in English, it kind of feels like a punishment somewhat, and it feels as if you are degrading what I know, what my parents speak. You correct me and the tendency is to say "Speak properly". So, when I speak Creole and you tell me speak properly it means something is wrong with the language I have been speaking even though...

MARIA: The passion that you feel about this language!

SANDRA: Yes.

MARIA: Because?

SANDRA: Well, it's what I grew up hearing. My neighbours spoke to me in Creole. My own parents spoke to me in Creole. It's like I said, the jokes, 'cause you know you try and do this filled with fun. So the jokes that you hear, the jokes that you tell, the riddles you hear, they are in Creole, and when you try to put them in English they lose their meaning.

#### ❖ It is a language because it allows Jamaicans to understand each other

I think it is a language. We understand our own tongue. Some persons cannot understand. So it's like Spanish. (KEISHA).

#### ❖ It is a language of identification amongst Jamaicans

There are places where we just can't use it. I do not abandon it. When I was coming from Spain last year, for example, I stopped at the JFK airport in New York and I saw a lot of Jamaicans there and I was so happy. I got to just speak in Patwa, very vulgar Patwa and I just felt at home. I felt like I was in Jamaica, because at the airport, a lot of Jamaican workers are there, and, just to speak Patwa, just to identify with the people, having been away from home for like nine months, for me was something very precious, very... very warm... something new. Something I always look back at. (MARIPOSA).

The excerpts above may be seen as a multiplicity of personal narratives around the matter discussed, and the bitter-sweet sentiments poured by participants may be interpreted

as a diversity of possible dimensions attached to participants' perceptions and conceptions of Jamaican Creole as a language. The double stances demonstrated in the interviews are precisely the elements that mark the wealth of any language. It is obvious that participants share the view that Jamaican Creole is a manifestation of Jamaican culture, which may be construed as a sign of acknowledging its status as a language. It is not surprising to hear some participants indicate that, regularizing may be a solution for "up-grading" Jamaican Creole to a language status; after all, they are members of a generation that has been struggling, and continues to struggle, for an Official status recognised by Parliament. Because they are all language teachers, it was neither strange to see that all of them referred to grammar as a point of reference to establish the status of Jamaican Creole as a language. Overall, it was interesting to observe that, in spite of their doubts, their emotional attachment to the language is remarkable; as they confidently spoke of their feelings for the language, and how Jamaican Creole allows them to do things and express themselves much better than Standard Jamaican English.

The personal and shared narratives about the status of Jamaican Creole surfacing from the discussion on participants' language perceptions and conceptions discussed above may be interpreted as manifestations of their "discourse of the mind". It may be argued that such personal narrative or mental discourse underpins participants' assertions in connection with the language, which perhaps suggests how individual narratives contribute to shape social narratives:

Our discourse is crossed by other discourses [which at the same time] are not created independently one from another, the inter-discourse results from the inter-crossing of the elements of the bigger "já dito" (already said), which are determined by the circumstances of collective consciousness. (FARACO, BLOG, 2010).

On the other hand, it would also be pertinent to argue that social discourse or narrative carries a particular thrust which has an impact on individual narratives or mental discourse. In this regard, it may also be fitting to bring into the discussion MAKONI & PENNYCOOK's (2007, p. 6) proposal that "it is not language per se that is of central importance, but discourse". The point here is, that Interviews presented the narratives or individual discourses of speakers about their language, and the fact that they have doubts when defining or ascertaining its status, may well be interpreted as evidence that a) Jamaican Creole users, just as speakers of any other language, are not really concerned about the definition or classification of their language and, b) the notion of Jamaican Creole may be an "invention" after all; based on the notion that "languages do not exist as real entities in the world and neither do they emerge from or

represent real environments; they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements” (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p. 2).

The assertion in MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007) may appear a bit out of tune when considering traditional views about language, most of which surfaced during the Personal Interview process. All in all, participants showed that they are, in fact, part of the great Jamaican Creole tradition, but “tradition is one type of discourse, with different traditions having different discourses through which their individual histories are articulated” (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p.6).

Participants did, in fact, reflect the narratives about language and the ideological undercurrents existing amongst them, as well as those pervading Jamaican society. The age cohort included in the research has shown an interesting diversity of ideas and positions with respect to the use of Jamaican Creole as a “constitutive activity”, given that “each of us departs from the social, but the fact that each of us have our own history that makes us unique, involves a social perspective that accepts the individual’s agency in society” (WANDERLEY (CITING BAKHTIN), in AZEVEDO, 2014, p. 106).

The Creole-speaking Spanish teachers, who have contributed to the fruition of this research, are subjects who own their agency in connection with Jamaican Creole; thus shaping and enhancing, rather than merely replicating the language conceptions of Jamaicans. Their ideas and beliefs about their language (their language ideology) is *productive* rather than *reproductive* and, even if historically and socially located, they can *imagine, dream and propose* as individuals. In other words:

[Bakhtin’s] notion about the social constitutive role of consciousness, through language, differs from Marxist determinism that interprets individuals as subject to their conditions. To Bakhtin, individuals also produce social conditions, in the sense that they act upon their conditions. Ideology is productive; not reproductive. Relationships amongst individuals constitutes their individuality, and creates their own history, but within specific historical circumstances. There are historical limits; but there are things that transcend those limits – all that can be imagined, dreamt, proposed...humanity does not walk over the footsteps of the past. (GERALDI, in AZEVEDO, 2014, p. 106).

Therefore, the narratives and language perceptions and conceptions discussed through this thesis reflect how individual Creole-speaking Spanish teachers have constructed the Jamaican Creole phenomenon that surrounds them. The multiplicity of stances is the natural result of the multiplicity of consciousness sharing the commonalities of their circumstances. Their opinions serve as “language constitutive acts” (GERALDI, in AZEVEDO, 2014, p. 107),



involving the connection between “language itself and the consciousness of men” as “language acts” that shape “subjectivities, which would be impossible without a relationship with others”.

The 2005 Attitude Survey, carried out by the Jamaica Language Unit (JLU) among Jamaicans, with the purpose of ascertaining the prevailing language attitudes in the Jamaican society, departed from observations regarding language use and an assumed impact on the teaching/learning process; perhaps resulting from the remarkable transition of Jamaican Creole from the confinement of homes and informal settings into the very educational institutions. Data Analysis of the SURVEY, 2005, p. 50 regarding the responses to the question “Is Patwa a Language?” in the Category “by Occupation”, showed “no significant relationship between occupation and the view of Patwa as a language. The majority of the sample, irrespective of occupational category, felt that Patwa was a language”.<sup>101</sup>

The perceptions/conceptions discussed above somehow align with the JLU findings; since, according to the participating teachers, Jamaican Creole is essential for Jamaicans based on the fact that daily social interactions materialize mostly in Jamaican Creole. Therefore, following popular views about Jamaican Creole seemed to provide plausible answers to their understanding of what a language is. However, as seen in the excerpts above, participants’ diverse stances in regards to what they perceive as a language seems to have been limited by their alignment with traditional criteria such as grammar or policy decisions. Such controversial diversity brought about the need to find other sources of information about this matter, which lead this researcher to the office of Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education for several years, now serving as Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister.

In her Personal Interview, FOSTER-ALLEN presented another possible angle to view the current situation in regards to the understanding of Jamaican Creole as a language. Her perspective about this matter rests on what she deems as “resistance” to accept the fact that Jamaican Creole is consolidated in Jamaica, and that it would be better to give way to its potentiality so that it can achieve the place it deserves in Jamaica. In her opinion, some of the observed elements of resistance are:

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<sup>101</sup> An interesting finding, except for the annoying uncertainty as to the category “unemployed”, given that the unemployed could be members of any social category. It would have been even more helpful if **profession** had been ascertained in those cases, which would have established a connection between profession and language conceptions.

- ❖ That languages are written down, and you have a dictionary, you have your lexicon...and people say “you don’t have that for Creole”.
- ❖ Jamaican is seen as poor people language. So, how are you going to elevate poor people language to a place that it can sit on a table? How are you going to make *smaddy* out of the poor people language?
- ❖ Where is the genesis of the language? And some want to give weight to English as opposed to African languages, West African languages, in particular.
- ❖ Policy issues around whether we should be teaching Jamaican as the first language, and what that would cost. Because you’d have to train teachers to teach the language, and then you’d have to train teachers to use English as a second language methodology in the teaching of English.
- ❖ The language of commerce and international interaction is Standard English.

FOSTER-ALLEN’s observations reconfirm what has been observed in Jamaica. Her personal narrative seems to align with the personal narratives of participating Spanish teachers, except that her perspective seems to be broader on account of her professional exposure as a government official who has been benefited from a wider observation of the language panorama, as well as the functioning of the Ministry of Education. The elements of resistance alluded by FOSTER-ALLEN, and quoted above, can be confirmed after interpreting the narratives emanating from interviews, unstructured conversations, as well as the polemic debates, discussions and comments found in social media forums, particularly those generated by press articles and columns, letters to the editors and television programmes dealing with the language matter in Jamaica. The ideas debated as well as the language used to present them literally covers an entire array of possibilities, from the passionate advocates to the most stringent detractors<sup>102</sup>.

One such newspaper column was published in the national newspaper The Jamaica Gleaner in 2013. It was a contribution by Esther Tyson under the title: **The language of instruction – Jamaican Creole or Standard Jamaican English?** In such publication, TYSON advocates for the use of Standard Jamaican English over Jamaican Creole, asserting that:

**Amid the present debate and concerning the outcomes of our education system and the benefits accrued to teachers, is a concern that I have. This concern relates to the decreasing thrust to teach Standard Jamaican English (SJE) at our tertiary institutions and rather to focus on the use of Jamaican Creole (JC) in the classrooms.** It is generally acknowledged that the world is a global village. The possibility of travel to various nations has exceeded the expectations of Jamaicans

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<sup>102</sup> See Annexes B, C, D & E.

even 20 years ago. Jamaicans are working in diverse corners of the earth. This means that we need to prepare our people to communicate with persons from different nations (TYSON, 2013)

The ensuing debate (see Annex B) brought forth a multiplicity of stances, both from supporters and detractors, as for example:

- ✓ Our children MUST indeed be taught English to the highest standard – both speaking and writing. This is the world in which we live. Yesterday it was Latin, today it's English. Later on it may be Chinese. At the same time we must not denigrate our Jamaican Creole. This is Jamaica, land we love.
- ✓ Will Jamaican college graduates who have not mastered standard English find employment in the corporate world of western countries?. Quite unlikely. Will they find jobs as low-level factory workers? Most likely.
- ✓ Thank you, Hilaire Sobers. Its exhausting to argue these issues with people who are steeped in colonial ideology and have no knowledge of the science of language or effective and current methodology to teach a language to non-native speakers. You can trust that every time you have a discussion about education in Jamaica, someone will try to get some attention by blaming Jamaican patois. Tired of these people!
- ✓ Speak for yourself boss man. I am sure you are around my age so how exactly did you become so eloquent? And why not fix things where you are and leave us here to sort our selves out?

It is a fact that whenever the matter of Jamaican Creole is presented, either through media publications, radio and television programmes, or social network posts, a literal Pandora Box is opened; with all sorts of passions flying around. But if an observer steps back and lets the dust settle, it may be possible to interpret a language narrative that, in general, replicates language debates in other countries. Many Jamaicans think that the issue of Haitian Creole, for instance, has been resolved. However, academics like the Haitian linguist Michel DEGRAFF (2014, p. 289) rue the fact that in “Haiti, it is striking that the domination of French persists even after Kreyòl was proclaimed an “official” language in the 1987” and despite the fact that Haitian Creole “is unquestionably the only language that “bonds” all Haitians together”. In a 2016 interview after the announcement of a Creole education policy by the Haitian Government, DEGRAFF presents some reasons as to why, despite being an official language, Haitian Creole was still not used a language of instruction:

**Question: How does your understanding of Kreyòl as a linguist undercut some of the justifications offered in the past for French-language use and instruction?**

Answer: One reason that has been offered to justify excluding Kreyòl from formal education is the claim that Kreyòl is a structurally lesser language that does not afford the same capacity as French to express complex concepts in science, mathematics,

philosophy, and so on. One dogma in linguistics is that Creole languages are the world's "simplest" languages because of their origins from "Pidgin" languages. Some linguists have even gone so far as to compare Creole languages to the earliest human languages spoken by Homo sapiens.

Another media publication that motivated a heated debate was the Letter to the Editor titled **No need to promote Patois** by Eugena Robinson (March 9, 2016). In her letter, the author stated:

The **Sunday Gleaner** of March 6, 2016 carried a very compelling article ('End prejudice against Patois') by Professor Hubert Devonish, coordinator of the Language Unit at UWI, Mona. He implores the incoming minister of education to consider ending the prejudice against the Patois.

I struggled to decipher the inset at the beginning of St Luke's Gospel in the article, and I gave up eventually. Our Jamaican dialect is an oral expression and we do not see the need for learning to see it in print. I will agree that children whose parents do not communicate in Standard Jamaican English (SJE) are at a disadvantage, particularly when the school does not set an acceptable standard in communication.

Obviously, this letter aligns with the narrative concerning the absolutely oral nature of Jamaican Creole, impossible to encapsulate and present in a written form, hence unsuited for educational purposes. Such narrative is known for mystifying the role of writing as a symbol of civilization (OLSON, 1994). The question remains as to what would happen to those growing and living in communities where Jamaican Creole is the main and, to most, the only, language of interaction? Such proposal brings to mind DEGRAFF's reference to "language apartheid" (p. 283), not only because Creole speakers would be stigmatized as less educated or "less intelligent" (JLU SURVEY, 2005), but also because many shall be subjected to an undeveloped educational growth. Such narrative brings to mind the case of Haiti, as mentioned by DEGRAFF (2014, p. 283):

The language was accorded an official orthography in 1979, and since the early 1980s the country's official programs for education have prescribed the use of Kreyòl as the initial language of instruction in primary schools. But in practice most books and most exams are still in French, even though the language is spoken by less than 10 percent of the population. Students from communities where only Kreyòl is spoken (by far the most typical situation) have little chance to succeed in school and even less chance to make it to university.

Therefore, the controversy raised by the ideas proposed in the previously referred letter was not surprising and deserves long quoting at length so that this narrative can be observed in its nuances:

- ✓ The esteemed lady and former educator (thanks for your service to our children) might not have intended it but her reasoning is dripping with

contempt and condescension for speakers of Jamaican Creole (AKA Patois). Why should parents contort their tongues to speak Standard English to their children. And then at the end of her letter she says some feelings can only be effectively expressed in Patois and that's what makes us Jamaican. However, one reason why parents use their first language, their mother tongue is because the feelings and emotions they wish to express is best done in Patois! Why should parents be subjected to the process of learning another language (in workshops!) on how to speak to their children? Which parents will be selected to do this? Parents from Norbrook? Beverley Hills, Cherry Gardens and Russell Heights? Stony Hill? This madness. Is this how a language is best learned? In workshops once or twice a week? The reason you can't read the Patois Bible Madam is no fault of the language. It is the fault of (y)our unfamiliarity and illiteracy in written Patois. I imagine if you chose to apply yourself and educate yourself in the phonics and literacy of Patois you would soon become a fluent and accurate reader in that wonderful language. If Patois is as wonderful as you write at the end of your letter, then you should help us developing it into a written language. We might even get a Standard Jamaican Creole out of the whole process.

- ✓ I find it hard to believe an educator could not teach herself to read Patois. I am no educator and I read it just fine. The problem is obviously the lack of desire. You state Patois is here to stay, this shows absolute ignorance of how languages interact. Patois has always been endangered, even more so with the flooding of society with American media. But that is besides the point. The reason for ignoring Patois is always of test scores and money. While money is to a certain extent important, how does it compare to self-respect and self-worth? How can an educator be so disparaging towards the children he is supposed to help? Chattering? Chattering is what animals do. Humans communicate, but the negative opinion that views children as animals due to their choice of language is there for all to see. There are thousands of Jamaicans on this planet walking around with scars from verbal abuse and physical abuse - attacks on their language. Is this ok to an educator? Obviously it is. Because all Jamaicans know what abuse is dished out under the pretext of test scores and future job opportunities. But that doesn't matter to most of our educators it seems. What really are they doing? Educating or brain washing via torture? It is exactly for this reason that Patois needs to be promoted. It is not about money. It is about human rights and equality of expression. In 2016 it is time to stop treating members of our population like beasts and cruffs because of their choice of expression. The Patois issue in Jamaica is our equivalent of the race issue in America. Patois speakers have a right to be treated with human dignity and equality. They have a right to stand with their backs and necks erect without feeling the whip of society on their backs. They have a right to life and liberty. So it is full time our false educators and society gi dem a blai (bligh) and change society into one that views Patois as a second language, not as broken speech.
- ✓ Patois is not a language. It cannot get you anywhere in life. Why didn't you write your post in Patois? While Patois is a part of our identity as a people, it cannot and will not help us with the advancement that we seek. I know that people all over the world take classes in Spanish, French, Portugese, Mandarin etc. Never heard of anyone taking Patois classes.
- ✓ It is broken speech, an it sound ignorant no hell
- ✓ And you just used it. What should I infer from that? "Broken (S) Peach"
- ✓ Having read your diatribe, I am certain you are either an idiot or have no goodwill for Jamaicans. Once and for all Patois is not a written language. Where is the standard grammar, syntax, and spelling.

The letter discussed above had been published in response to Hubert Devonish's contribution **End prejudice against Patois**, published on Sunday, March 6, 2016. In his letter to the Minister of Education at the time, Professor Devonish advocated the urgency of resolving the language issue in Jamaica, particularly in the area of education by rejecting, in his own words, the "Trump-like simplicity" of thinking that the situation concerning bad exam results would be resolved once Jamaicans stopped "glorifying Jamaican Patois" and start "speaking and writing 'correct English'". According to Prof. Devonish, Reverend Ronnie Thwaites, then Minister of Education, seemed to have ignored that, based on a 2006 Language Survey, "36 per cent of the population may not have any control of English and, of the 46 per cent who speak both English and Jamaican, the control of the former is likely to be rather weak". The explosion of criteria and opinions was not a surprise, since Prof. Devonish's letter was aimed at raising controversy from the very opening statement:

Dear new Minister of Education,  
World Mother Language Day was celebrated globally on February 21. The day passed without notice in Jamaica. Is this because, for the government, the media and for those with social, political and economic influence, the issue of mother language/mother tongue does not arise since, 'unlike those benighted countries in Africa and the Pacific, thank God, we speak English in Jamaica?' But, do we?

Questioning the speaking and writing of "correct English" may be generally accepted, but questioning whether English is spoken in Jamaica never sits well among many, as reflected in the resulting debate; which included the Letter to the Editor previously discussed.

- ✓ He is right but will not succeed without political intervention. Most Jamaicans love money over people. If we have no problems killing for money, who is going to support Patois when the scaremongers claim it will bring about the apocalypse if we legitimise Patois. I will wait for the youth to stand up for it.
- ✓ There is no consensus as to what constitutes standard patois. I certainly don't speak the genre of patois they used to translate the gospels. So first of all there has to be consensus on standard use. This is what Kriyol in Haiti has over Jamaican patois. There has to be a national commission and consultations on this.
- ✓ The writer of this article is as misguided as they come. He is no different from the ones who subscribe to utopian dreams. If you want to further isolate Jamaica from the rest of the world, change our mother tongue to that of broken English/Jamaican/Patois or whatever you want to call it. If our educational system was where it should be, most Jamaicans would have a command of the English language. Bermudans, Barbadians and Bahamians have managed to better command the English language, we can do the same. Seriously, if he were correct, why is it that the Bermudans, Barbadians and the Bahamians don't have the same reality? Broken French has mostly

crippled Haitians. Are we going to transliterate all of our written references to that of Jamaican/Patois? That is foolhardy at best. In doing so, we will lose the benefits of economy by scale; if our written references have to be written specifically for us, we would have a very difficult time finding anything. Look at BlackBerry, only once in a blue moon do programmers create apps for BlackBerry—all for the fact that there are little or no BlackBerry users. When BlackBerry want app, they have to develop and maintain them for themselves—otherwise, they have to pay an exorbitant amount of money to developers.

- ✓ Our own indigenous language would be dead on arrival. Things would not be so bad if the so-called language was probably developed with little or no fragmentations. I find pleasure in communicating in our colloquial tongue; however, there is no need for it to become our native tongue. Such is a backward step and our country would pay dearly if we were shun English for Patois or whatever it would be ultimately called.

The narratives emanating from the excerpts previously presented evidence a rich multiplicity of stances surrounding the situation of languages in Jamaica. The line of thought followed through the discussion presented in this thesis points towards the assumption that such controversy is not a rare or isolated occurrence. On the contrary, the research data generated through interviews and conversations, as well cartographic observations of the Jamaican society shows that, overall, Jamaicans feel they have the right, and the need, to voice their opinions about their language reality. Hence, a closer look at the controversial opinions highlighted may reveal a rich narrative relating to language and cultural awareness.

#### **4.5.7. Speaking Jamaican Creole seems to be associated with the gender stratification that exists in Jamaica.**

Participants' narrative show a link between the use of Jamaican Creole and gender stratification. Such notion was striking; as it points at discursive practices marking Jamaican idiosyncrasy in regards to social gender differentiation<sup>103</sup>. According to MAVERICK, whose teaching experience includes co-educational institutions, all-male institutions, and all-female institution, there is a clear distinction in the use of Jamaican Creole among men and women. In his interview he indicated that, at the boarding all-male school, students use Jamaican Creole as the *Lingua Franca* for their personal interactions,

I would say that it is Creole rather than English. There are about a little bit less than 400 students [boarding], and these students come from all over the island, all over the country and from some other countries too, but the creole that they brought into is so... overwhelming, and *even though they are from homes where English is... encouraged, the moment they get there, something new is presented to them and they hear it so much around them that they fall right into it* (our emphasis). So they aren't

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<sup>103</sup> "Males were more likely than females to think Patwa should be an official language (71.7% compared to 65.3%)." (JLU Survey, 2005, p.38).

afraid of it, they embrace it and I think they try to learn it so much so that they can fit in, so that they can blend in. I don't think there is a fear for the Creole. (MAVERICK, Personal Interview).

On the contrary, in all-female schools, Maverick mentioned that “you hear a lot more English”, but in co-ed schools, the way “the boys talk to each other had a little bit difference with how the girls talk to each other and then how the boys talk to girls” (Interview). Maverick’s assertions in this regard were, indeed, reflected in a research carried out by the British Council of Jamaica. Such study revealed that Standard Jamaican English is associated with feminine behaviour, whereas Jamaican Creole is associated with a masculine behaviour:

A recent survey by the British Council has found that the tendency of Jamaican boys to view reading and language proficiency as a mark of effeminacy [...] The team noted in the report of its findings that the decline in students' performance in English was being fuelled by a non-reading culture, the use of Patois as refuge against standard Jamaican English, as well as boys seeing reading and language proficiency as effeminate. (WILSON-HARRIS, Gleaner Article, 2015).

A more in-depth research on such matter would be worthwhile, nonetheless, given that it may offer a wider perspective in connection with language use in Jamaica, and would prevent superficial conclusions in this regard. However, even when such discussion seems to divert from the core matter of this thesis, it would be pertinent to quote FARACO’s (2010, PERSONAL BLOG) reference to the relevance of the sociocultural contexts where languages evolve, since each language is “an open and multiple cluster of socio-interactional, oral or written, practices, developed by historically situated individuals”.

FARACO’s assertion could be one of the explanations to the male-female imbalance in Standard Jamaican English use and actual learning, considering the analysis of “statistics [which] illustrate the gravity of the problem of achieving competence in the target language, particularly for males at all levels (LANGUAGE POLICY, 2001, p. 16). MAVERICK’s interview, hence, generates some questions in regards to the socio-interactional use of Jamaican Creole at Munroe All-Boys College, particularly when that institution is recognized for its high social and educational standards in Jamaica; being ranked among the best schools in the island.

One burning question arising from this interview has to do with the consideration of issues of masculinity versus femininity, widely determined by the use of Jamaican Creole. The hypothesis supporting the use of Jamaican Creole as a symbol of masculinity could be valid; however, it would also be valid to bring forth the issue of national pride, since using Jamaican Creole is seen as a marker of being a Jamaican (in and out of the island). Further studies on this matter would be of great interest, as they may provide deeper insights into the narratives



around language choice/use in Jamaica. However, considering the possible connection between this matter and a multiplicity of personal, social, educational, ideological and cultural factors, the material would be too lengthy to be included within the scope of this research.

#### **4.5.8. School categorization reflects social and language stratification in Jamaica**

According to Participants, there is a division within the school system in Jamaica that categorises secondary educational institutions as Traditional and Non-traditional:

The categories of school in Jamaica: Some of them are referred as traditional, and some of them are referred as non- traditional high schools. When they talk about *traditional* school, it's usually linked to performance. So, there are some schools that have not been upgraded from secondary level. In the past they usually have what they call comprehensive high schools. Those schools never used to have students who did very well academically and then eventually they were upgraded to high schools. There are some other schools however that have been doing well from day one, most of them have students who are from a better socioeconomic background and some of these schools have a trust fund going on, and there is a lot of support in that kind of system and those schools are referred to as traditional high schools of Jamaica. So I work at one of those schools, we pretty much get the cream of the crop kind of students. The students do very well, they are usually better behaved, their parents are supportive of what is going on in school and the ministry itself lends a lot more support to those kinds of schools. (SANDRA, Personal Interview).

Sandra's assertions provided the basis for certain issues observed while conducting interviews in some schools. One of the interviews was done at one "traditional school" between 10 and 11:30 in the morning, with students roaming around Campus and some even at a Physical Education class in the field close to the library, where the interview was being conducted, but none of that affected the video-recording. The environment was extremely quiet, peaceful and clean. The school architecture is classy, and students' behaviour was polite and disciplined. Such situation appears to be similar in most of the "traditional schools" Sandra referred to during her interview. In "non-traditional schools", on the contrary, the situation is entirely different. Such peaceful environment is rarely observed when students are at lunch-break or at sports activities. There is a considerable change in the acoustic environment, which caused a change of interview venue on more than one occasion while at one of the "non-traditional schools". Cartographic observations of the student population also revealed that the use of Standard Jamaican English prevails in traditional schools; whereas Jamaican Creole is the language of regular interaction at non-traditional schools. Such observation was then confirmed by Sandra, who has experience working at both categories of schools.

Interestingly, I worked at non-traditional schools in Kingston, as well as a traditional high school in Kingston. I'm saying that to say that I don't think there's a relation between the Creole and the place itself, Kingston being the place. It's really the

school, because you have different types of students going to different types of schools. So, at the non-traditional high school, both in Kingston and the rural area, the students tend to speak Creole largely. When you go to the classroom, they **will**<sup>104</sup> speak to you in Creole. You want to say something to them in English, and they respond in Creole. When they attempt to respond in English, they shy away, they lack confidence, students laugh at them, they laugh at themselves and they revert to Creole for their survival. In the Traditional high schools, both in Kingston and the rural area, students largely spoke Standard English. I'm gonna say something here as well. It's interesting to know that the students who speak Standard English, they do so to set themselves above other people. Yes, speaking Standard English is seen almost like a weapon against those who don't speak it.

Sandra's assertions may be associated to other observations in regards to the use of both languages, Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole, for specific intentions<sup>105</sup>. In her opinion, Standard Jamaican English may be used as a tool for the speaker to distance him/herself from the interlocutor, at times with the intention of expressing superiority; whereas Jamaican Creole seems to be a very effective tool to manifest anger or annoyance.

When I was going to high school, my friends and I, we were at a non-traditional high school, but in a bright class per se. So, like the top stream and if we got into an argument with somebody from a lower stream, we'd make sure to tell them off properly using Standard English, and the majority of the time they couldn't respond and, in frustration, they would just tell us some indecent language and walk away [...] In Creole and walk away. So, at the Non-traditional high school, as I was saying before, the richer set of kids tend to go there and the brighter ones go there as well, you know, so, when they speak standard English they feel like they are better than the average person. (SANDRA, Personal Interview).

The perception discussed above seems to be shared by several Jamaicans. Data from the 2005 JLU SURVEY points out that: "Only 7.7% of the sample believed that a person speaking Patwa would be more intelligent than a person speaking English" (P. 16); "Only 6.6% of the sample believed that the Patwa speaker would be more educated compared with 61.7% who thought the English speaker would be more educated (P. 20), and "only 8.8% of the sample thought that the Patwa speaker would have more money" (P. 20). Apparently, the narrative unveiled during the interview process implies that there is a connection between sociolinguistic stratification and the perceived school stratification system.

#### **4.6. Narratives around Jamaican Creole and its impact on Spanish language teaching/learning**

The participating Spanish teachers provided information that allowed creating knowledge about how they are operating within the language context of Jamaica. They shared

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<sup>104</sup> Sandra's emphasis.

<sup>105</sup> This finding coincides with 2005 JLU Survey that reported the opinions of 20.6% respondents who believed that the Ministers speaking Creole could be interpreted as an act to "talk down to the masses" (OP. CIT. p.16).

views, ideas and, at times, frustrations, which coincidentally touched the experiential exposure of the researcher herself. The empathy between the participating teachers and the researcher became a contributing factor in the generation of the narrative map presented through this chapter, particularly when considering a narrative landscape that shows some of the ups and downs of foreign language teaching within the complex sociocultural context of Jamaica, which quite often compels many Spanish teachers to resort to creative ways and practices in order to navigate through a situation hardly acknowledged in leading curricular guidelines and institutional policies. Henceforth, a discussion of some of the prevailing narratives concerning the professional endeavours of this group of Spanish teachers.

#### **4.6.1. Jamaican Creole orality benefits the learning of Spanish**

Both languages, Creole and Spanish, are perceived by the participating Creole users as sharing similarities in their sounds, intonation and some grammatical structures. This perception among Participants may seem somewhat odd, particularly to Spanish speakers; most of whom feel thrown off when they get in contact with Jamaican Creole. However, Participants' showed a remarkable level of conviction in this regard.

It's closer to Spanish than to English. That's my observation. And that helps, because when they are able to pick up the similarity and use it in their Spanish, then they get the pronunciation better. And they get the spelling better too. (KENT, Personal Interview).

Other participants shared Kent's opinion:

You know, when you are teaching, you wanna teach *me gusta*, you can just show the same, you can write that with the same grammar, the same format that the Spanish has with the Patwa. (MIKA, Personal Interview).

The opinions above may be plausible explanations for a phenomenon occurring in Jamaica: It has been reported that the learning of Spanish appears to be more solid among students who are Creole speakers, especially in the case of monolingual Creole speakers. According to Martha Corbett Baugh, Education Officer for Spanish/French at the Ministry of Education in Jamaica, it has been noted that many Jamaican Secondary Education learners are able to read and write in Spanish, without mastering English. Such assertion was, indeed, confirmed during one of the interviews:

It is so ironic though, that students who grow up in poor communities are the ones who have been better in Spanish language, and though the school... let me not generalize. What I find with the ones who are poor, they tend to be more... passionate about the Spanish language. I don't know why. Maybe some words in Spanish that they can identify with. For example "mi" and "papa", and uhhh... some words, you

know, that you can take from the Patwa and identify it with the Spanish. (MARIPOSA, Personal Interview).

Naturally, the phenomenon mentioned above would require further study, but it could be assumed that, aside from some similarities in the oral and grammatical aspects of Spanish and Jamaican Creole, it is also important to consider the use of an alternative that utilises language for enhancing learning and communication, based on a direct reference to Jamaican Creole “as a social tool for the carrying out of [learning] transactions” (ROBERTS, 2004, p. 3). Such alternative could bring about better learning results, since the teacher would be freed from the intrusion of Standard Jamaican English as a compulsory third language in the lesson. It could also be assumed that the effective teaching of Spanish within the Jamaican context involves understanding that the teacher is creating a moment of meaningful communication amongst learners that are operating within “a speech community [characterised by] heterogeneity and differential competence” (ROBERTS, 2004, p. 10). Furthermore, as has been exposed by the participating teachers, it could be suitable to assume that the learners’ uses of their Mother Tongue helps them achieve a better understanding of the Spanish language notions put across. A research to validate the assumptions above would offer an important insight on this matter and would ultimately become a valid source to improve academic pursuits in the teaching of Spanish, and other Foreign Languages in Jamaica.

#### **4.6.2. Jamaican Creole grammar impacts the learning of Spanish grammar**

Some participants are of the opinion that Jamaican Creole grammar has an impact on the Spanish learner because Jamaican Creole grammar depends more on the use of free morphemes to express the grammatical notions of number and tense, whereas Spanish grammar relies on declensions or grammatical cases.

Creole grammar is confusing to the students. If you try to explain, because you know Creole, *dem deh*, and *he* could be *she*, and *she* could be *he*; so that would just be one messy situation. [Spanish is] very strict to the pronouns and very strict with the pluralization, and the Creole is *dem*. Creole is specific, but, it would confuse them, because it’s specific in some cases, and it’s not specific in some cases. (KENT, Personal Interview).

This perception is not far from what has been observed in many Spanish lessons within the Jamaican context, even in the cases where a communicative approach with a thorough contextualization of grammar items is used. It appears that the mind-frame of a Jamaican Creole speaker takes time to adjust to a different way of formulating structures; as observed by the author (SÁNCHEZ, et al, 2011), as well as the participating teachers. Nonetheless, as

Maverick points out, it is important for teachers to bear in mind that, for most of their students, their primary linguistic reference is Creole:

I have to use creole grammar to teach Spanish because, when you listen to them speak, you know. For example, in English you say *the boys*, in Creole it would be *de boy them*. To understand how to explain pluralisation in Spanish, I have to start off with that link, so that they understand that this is what is being said, because for the most part [they speak] so much Creole, you can't ignore it. It's essential to them, and any attempt to eradicate it would be met by some amount of resistance, and so you have to use it, sensibly, to bring about what you want when you are trying to teach Spanish to them, so, we have to use it. (MAVERICK, Personal Interview).

From Maverick's statement, it may be interpreted that, using Creole to teach Spanish is a feasible methodological procedure and, at times necessary to achieve comprehension in cases where Jamaican Creole is the prevailing language among his learners. In Mariposa's opinion, however, using Creole while teaching Spanish is a wrong methodological choice and, at the same time, it may divert from the adequate teaching strategies required by learners whose future depends on their knowledge of Standard Jamaican English, the language of education and examination. In her words:

No. if I say *wah go on?*, you know, I mean, I want to make it dramatic, *wah go on?*, "what's going on" ( *¿qué tal?*, *¿cómo están?*), I've said it has its place, one or two times, but I wouldn't flood the classroom with Creole. I would never flood it and say that you have to know Patwa, to know English, to know Spanish. No. I think it's not necessary (MARIPOSA, Personal Interview).

Sandra brings forth another perspective on the matter of teaching grammar. In her view, resorting to a "communicative approach" to the teaching of Spanish grammar may yield better learning results because lessons will rest on the teaching of Spanish language forms, as they are used in real contexts, rather than on grammatical items included in made-up situations. She sees learning as a practical moment when learners use the language to do things (ask questions, go shopping, describe places, etc.) through dramatizations and role-playing, instead of memorizing phrases and structures.

Well, I think it's [Creole in the classroom] necessary. If you are teaching students who speak Creole, then it's necessary for you to use the language they understand to communicate certain concepts. But, I feel more strongly towards using a communicative approach to teaching, because what I find is that, when you do it like that, you don't have to draw so much reference to the mother tongue. So, as I was saying. Use it if they speak Creole. I would more say, use a communicative approach, so that you don't necessarily have to draw so many references to their language (SANDRA, Personal Interview).

The difference of opinions seen above seems to be consistent with the participants' stances in connection with the role of Jamaican Creole as a language of instruction. Most agree that using Jamaican Creole during their classes is a good move towards achieving the desired learning results; for others the use Jamaican Creole is not always a feasible tool; not just because of the "confusing" (KENT) grammar, but also because it is "not the language of education" (MARIPOSA). Nonetheless, some participants acknowledge that, in many schools, resorting to Jamaican Creole is the only possible alternative, given that most (if not all) students are primarily Creole users; hence utilizing Standard Jamaican English seems like an exercise in futility (KENT), based on the students deficient knowledge of that language variety.

Sandra's assertion, however, touches on an important language teaching aspect pertaining to the use of a communicative approach whereby grammar is not taught separately and apart from language items, but incorporated through language items to produce communicative situations. Based on Sandra's proposal, then, Jamaican Creole would not be needed, since the aim is to lead learners towards the use of Spanish structures as naturally and as closely as possible to Spanish native language use. The communicative perspective Sandra is suggesting has to do with a principle that would invite Spanish grammar only as needed for communicative purposes. Hence students would learn language functions (giving directions, making telephone calls, socializing, talking about their daily routines, etc.) rather than grammatical structures, terminologies, or comparisons with their language of reference (Jamaican Creole or Standard Jamaican English).

It may be suitable, however, to bring forth that the proposed notion of a communicative approach contrasts with the rhizomatic and translingual views presented through this thesis. On the one hand, the rhizomatic perspective views language development as a process of constant transformation and growth, never as a finished product. In other words, as a "patch of oil" (DELUZE & GUATTARI (1987, p. 10), language grows as a fluid and living organism marked by its endless transformation under specific contextual circumstances. It seems then that a communicative approach, in the sense proposed by Sandra, may be insufficient to cover such growth dynamics; as it may be hard to ascertain which functions are to be taught, or to be clear as to which is suitable for which context, or how relevant such functions still remain for the users of the language being taught. Furthermore, decisions concerning lesson contents would necessarily consider the choice of language variety, an issue loaded with complexity as well, given the caveat concerning "the myth of a language that presumes to be the only language, and the myth of a language that presumes to be completely unified (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 98).

Therefore, with that in mind, it seems appropriate to reiterate the adequacy of the translingual approach previously proposed, and treat classrooms as contact zones where new language rhizomes are emerging, where grammar is not a language item, but an underlying path towards the lesson goal, and where functions are seen as discursive acts of expression with “multiple, heterogeneous and uneven temporalities [that bring forth] overlapping, translingual language uses (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p. 28), and which are “constantly redefined and reconfigured” (CANAGARAJAH, 2013, p. 27) in the academic process during class, and hopefully, in out-of-class interactions.

#### **4.6.3. The National Spanish Curriculum for Secondary Education does not reflect Jamaican Creole situation in the island**

According to the participating teachers, the Curriculum documents, including the latest that have been circulated by the MOE, do not present any suggestion as to how to deal with cases where most students are Creole speakers, and many have limited knowledge of Standard Jamaican English. Consequently, Spanish teachers claim that, apart from being compelled to make the logical adaptations to the document, based on their learners’ linguistic reality, most of them have to undertake the teaching of Standard English simultaneously; since as stated before, they need to resort to Jamaican Creole to explain the Spanish language contents to their students, and then revert to Standard Jamaican English.

MARIA: Have you seen the Spanish national curriculum?

KENT: Once. Yes.

MARIA: Have you seen any mention or any reference or any stance in regards to Creole in Jamaica?

KENT: No. I don't remember seeing anything about it. All is in relation to Standard English. There's no mention of the Mother Tongue.

MARIA: At all?

KENT: No. I don't know if I'm qualified to speak of it. I have not seen it. I'd have to read it again with that objective to see if there's mention of it. (KENT, Personal Interview).

It seems a bit striking in Kent’s case, because he is working at a school where the vast majority of students are, in fact, Creole Speakers, many of them leaning to a monolingual rather than a bilingual status; which brings to the fore the urgent need to address such oversight; not only by revising the document and effecting the necessary corrections, but also by making provisions for cases like Kent’s school. With the purpose of deepening on this issue, some very specific questions were asked to Participants who work in schools where the linguistic environments differ, as they have student population who may be classed as bilinguals.

MARIA: How about the Spanish Curriculum? Are you familiar with it?

- MARIPOSA: To an extent. I'm familiar with it to an extent because I'm the active Head of Department here at Manchester High. It has been revised from time to time. I also teach up to the CAPE<sup>106</sup> level. I'm familiar with it, yes.
- MARIA: Is there any positioning, or any reference, or any advice in connection with Jamaican creole?
- MARIPOSA: No. Generally no. The books are written in Standard English, and I believe that the books are written in Standard English because we have common exams in the Caribbean, which is the CSEC<sup>107</sup> exam. So, you are not going to find Jamaicans sitting on an exam by themselves, or Bajans<sup>108</sup> or Trinidadians, you find a common exam. A Bajan would not understand our Jamaican creole. A Trinidadian would not understand our Jamaican Creole. Maybe one or two words. So, in order to have a common link, a common ground, I think the English language is the best option.
- MARIA: So, would you say, then, that the National Curriculum for Spanish has a regional character, rather than a national character?
- MARIPOSA: It does. Yes. In terms of the syllabus, if you look at it, yes, the books are written in English and Spanish. No Patwa is mentioned. No. The syllabus, the curriculum, everything is geared at the regional level.
- MARIA: Then you think that's ok. You think it's OK for the National Curriculum to be geared towards these regional exams, where English is the dominant language and Creole has no place?
- MARIPOSA: Yes, I think so, because the truth is that, as I said, one common exam will be done among everybody and people will travel, and there's no need to use the Patwa, except like for cultural... exchange. It's...
- MARIA: Folklore.
- MARIPOSA: Yes [laugh]. For no other reason. (Personal Interview).

Mariposa's assertions, concerning the regional character of the National Curriculum for Spanish designed at the level of the Ministry of Education in Jamaica, were corroborated by MAVERICK; who also referred to the practical need students have in regards to the prospects (or lack thereof) of Secondary Education Certification in order to access Tertiary Education.

- MARIA: Well, you read the document. Did you find any position in regards to creole? Any advice?
- MAVERICK: The advice... isn't so much as an advice, but a provision is made for the teacher to be flexible. Understanding that if this is what the students are accustomed to, and, you know, use language flexibility, uhm... because, that's what the student is going to readily draw on. So, there isn't a rule. There isn't anything dictating. What it does, it creates provision. There is some space allowance for the use of the creole in imparting the different concepts to the, uhm... to the students, because the same curriculum, is taken out of the CXC curriculum, which is broader than the Jamaican curriculum, and so, the dictate in terms of what language to use has to be a little more flexible because in Trinidad is the same curriculum that we are using. And so, from that is that the Jamaican curriculum is taken, but the broader picture is the CXC syllabus, which has to cater to all the

<sup>106</sup> Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination.

<sup>107</sup> Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate.

<sup>108</sup> Caribbean name given to natives of Barbados.



different countries on which CXC is used. (MAVERICK, Personal Interview).

This reality brings forth considerations that extend beyond the role of the Ministry of Education in general, or the teachers in particular. The fact that there are Regional Exams with language requirements that escape the prevailing reality of Caribbean local languages continues to be a reminder of colonial policies still lingering in the region. In a move to discontinue colonial examination policies, which involved the setting and marking of exams in Great Britain, fifteen Caribbean countries agreed on the establishment of the CXC Council". Such move represented a great achievement at the time, but four decades later, it appears to be too insufficient.

The Language Policy promoted by the Jamaican Ministry of Education clearly responds to CXC Examination requirements, and binds Spanish teachers to responsibilities that surpass the scope of their teaching practices. According to MAVERICK, The Spanish National Curriculum, seems to be geared towards the development of communicative competence in Spanish, placing students in a knowledge situation that "saves them the trouble" of referring to their Mother Tongue, whichever that may be:

It is more themed. For example, we have to talk to them about how to get along if they are at the airport, if they are in the supermarket, if they are in a Spanish speaking country and they are in this environment what expressions would be needed. So, it's aware of it. The issue is with the culture. They like to translate word for word, so there is a resistance in terms of learning the new curriculum, what is being put forward, because we have been encouraged over the years to tie in the language with the culture, and because the creole culture is so dominant, there is a struggle. The new curriculum is going to take some time to get us to the point where we want to, so, uhm... what it does, it emphasizes more of the understanding of the Spanish culture, the teachers have to create the environment of the Spanish culture. (MAVERICK).

Such proposal seems very adequate, if speaking merely and technically about the teaching of foreign languages, which entails contextualizing everyday communicative situations, rather than relying on translation or transposition of language aspects from one language to another. But Maverick has pointed out an issue that has been observed during the research process (and before): there seems to be a strong presence of methodologies that rest upon translations, typological comparisons, and grammatical approaches to language teaching. Those methods used for foreign language teaching may be limited, among other aspects, because they are basically geared towards passing exams, and because they are bound by what AZEVEDO (2014) terms "minimal" curricula designed "by the very same persons who

supervise the design of guidelines and exams [involving the definition of] those “skills and competencies” to be mastered in each year!!” (AZEVEDO, 2014, p. 101).

Nonetheless, there seems to be some issues that militate against a move away from minimal curricula. The fact is, that Jamaicans (and Caribbean) nationals are compelled to sit regional examinations, based on specific language and content requirements; in spite of the amendments to the Foreign Language curriculum proposed as far back as 1980:

The 1980 curriculum utilized a modified foreign language teaching approach. The revised document includes Language Awareness, which is a recognition of the range of language registers in pupils’ speech environment, and language learning by the use of communicative strategies as well as by contrasting the characteristics of JC & SJE. The MOEY&C<sup>109</sup> developed readers to support the 1980 curriculum, employing at Grades 1 -3 the modified foreign language strategies proposed. System-wide, the MOEY&C has

- provided, free of cost, readers developed for Grades 1-6;
- developed, and made available for minimal rental fees, texts for slow readers at Grades 7-9, utilizing both JC and SJE in real life contexts;
- developed high interest, culturally relevant material for slow readers at Grade 4 and at Grades 7-9;
- promoted nationwide summer literacy camps for “at risk” pupils of Grade Four, thereby providing a second opportunity for attaining levels set for promotion to Grade Five;
- continued to make literacy interventions in selected schools through internationally funded projects (MOE LANGUAGE POLICY 2001, p. 16)

The quotation above proves that already in 1980, there was a deliberate attempt on the part of the Ministry of Education to divert from traditional language practices/requirements, and invest on a curriculum that would afford more consideration to the linguistic situation of the students. This move may be assumed as one of the factors generating heated social debates around the issue of language, which continue to-date, and which were at the centre of ideological trends conforming the way of thinking among the generation to which the participating teachers belong. Such reasoning may be at the root of Maverick’s reference to the “advice” concerning more language “flexibility”. Maverick’s concern was confirmed by Errol Haughton, Acting Education Officer for Spanish/French:

“There is no reference to Creole in the Curriculum, which can be interpreted as a divorce between language and culture. The Curriculum was mostly based on the European reference framework, aimed at preparing students for a future life and work abroad. But teachers have been using Creole, even though it is not mentioned in the Curriculum. Now, we have a new Curriculum, which is at a Pilot Stage, to be introduced in the near future (HAUGHTON, Personal Interview).

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<sup>109</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture.

Interviews with relevant education officers and Spanish teachers, as well as document reviews point at a changing trend (albeit slow) in matters pertaining to the consideration of Jamaica's language situation. The Ministry of Education, for instance, is currently spearheading a process aimed at changing the situation of the National Curriculum. In 2016, two workshops were held by the Ministry with the purpose of streaming the language contents and bringing Jamaican Creole into the mix. "The new Curriculum is being piloted in Jamaica and is expected to bring a change" (CORBETT, Interview).

#### **4.7. Final Remarks on the Narratives around Jamaican Creole**

The interview process unveiled narratives involving aspects concerning participants' language perceptions, conceptions and stories, by means of cartographic exchanges within school contexts; as well as face-to-face interactions with Jamaican Creole users, most of whom are currently working as Spanish teachers in schools located in different regions of Jamaica. Cartographic observations allowed achieving first-hand experience in relation to how those Spanish teachers operate within a Creole-speaking context, even when regulatory documents like the National Curriculum for Spanish seem oblivious to the prevailing linguistic reality of the island.

The cartographic approach followed in search for information about the narratives mentioned above have unveiled a connection between the narratives about the language situation in Jamaica and those pertaining to Spanish teaching practices amongst participants. Interactions during interviews indicate that, being aware of the language situation of Jamaica, the participating teachers resort to teaching procedures that facilitate their job within the specificities of their classroom speech communities. Narratives amongst this group may be interpreted as reflections of personal and shared views of language professionals, marked by their endeavours to deal with classroom realities that have an impact on their teaching of Spanish.

Being at the Field, therefore, allowed the researcher to be in direct contact with the participating Spanish teachers and discuss their stories and perspectives; which provided a remarkable wealth of information, a unique moment of academic interaction and mutual enhancement, and a precious opportunity for "understanding real people and their social relations within complex contexts" (MORAES & SCHULZ, 2015, p. 27).

The conversations and information exchange obtained from interviews offered a panoramic view of how Jamaican Creole is perceived by Creole users who are teaching Spanish in Jamaica; as well as the extent to which such perceptions are manifested in the teaching

methodologies embraced by participants, particularly the inclusion of Jamaican Creole as the language on instruction.

The cartographic approach followed during the interview process, determined that the data generated was viewed as a “communicable cartography”, which led the discussions as an interaction rather than a recount of stories and ideas (MORAES & SCHULZ, 2015, p. 140), hence becoming ideal ground for a collaborative moment around the material discussed, especially on the issue of narratives.

Interviews worked as spaces where participants voiced their opinions and positioned themselves, which allowed the construction of an image about Creole-speaking Spanish teachers within the context of Jamaica. However, none of the participants can be deemed to have been passively replicating the claims of the Jamaican discourse around Jamaican Creole. Even though their contributions seemed to be part of a shared discourse; their personal perspectives and reflections on the matter helped curve and re-invent that general discourse.

A point worth noticing in this regard, is the considerable level of diversity existing among participants in terms of opinions concerning the status of Jamaican Creole as a language, which may be an indication that the issue of language conception is a controversial matter; as shown by the multiplicity of opinions, both among participants and within themselves. At one point, all of them categorically stated that Jamaican Creole is essential for Jamaicans, due to its extended presence and intensive use among its speakers in practically all places and social interactions in the island. However, in the same interview, most participants contradicted themselves by expressing doubts or negating that Jamaican Creole is a language, per se; thus reflecting their alignment with traditional social and linguistic claims regarding the difference between languages and dialects:

Dialects tended to be considered spoken forms, while languages were accorded their special status according to other criteria such as regional similarities, family trees or literary forms. One of the problems with this, however, was that while people had terms for their dialects – or at least terms for other people’s dialects (their own being considered the way one speaks) – they did not have terms for these larger constructions, ‘languages’. (MAKONI & PENNYCOCK, 2007, p. 10).

What the researcher perceived in this regard, is that participants *know* they speak a language that is *essential* to them, because it is used in their daily social interactions; they *know* their students need such language to improve their learning capabilities, and they *know* that language carries the required tools for expressing their innermost emotions or sense of humour, BUT, at the same time, they *feel* it is not a language because it does not compare to other

*universal* languages with *established grammatical* systems or an acknowledged *literary* production. They *know* Jamaican Creole is all around them, but they *feel* it has *its place*. It may appear that participants are feeling the “real and material effects” of language inventions (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007, p.2).

Participants’ perceived contradictions offer interesting material for consideration because they serve as carriers of multiple truths. As observed during the interviews, such contradictions may, indeed, point towards diverse ideological positions; whilst also offering relevant insights in regards to the sociolinguistic landscape prevailing in Jamaica, including lingering colonial traditional language views about Jamaican Creole

As a whole, interviews provided an interesting panorama in connection with participants’ perceptions of Jamaican Creole. The interviewed Spanish teachers, who are all Creole users, are well aware of the language situation in Jamaica, as well as its impact (positive and/or negative) on Spanish teaching and learning. Through their opinions, participants also showed the way in which they contribute to and replicate the positions observed in the Jamaican society at large, hence the controversial positions about Jamaican Creole. Through the years, Jamaicans have been expressing very strong views about Jamaican Creole, which can be easily observed by reading newspaper columns and their ensuing debates; or by listening to radio programs which offer time for callers to participate and express their views, thus generating heated debates which, by and large, present a view of how Jamaicans perceive the language. Those debates usually show a considerable diversity of stances, mixed with a notable passion to defend or detract, respect or scorn the language.<sup>110</sup>

The exchange experienced during interviews fulfilled the very important purposes of revealing participants’ narratives through their stances or positions in connection with Jamaican Creole. Their personal perspectives and story-lines surfaced in the discussions; showing, as well, a connection between their story-lines and the positions adopted (LANGENHOVE & HARRÉ, 1994, p. 363).

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<sup>110</sup> See Annexes B, C, D & F to read some comments generated by newspaper columns dealing with the matter of Jamaican Creole.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The phrase “final considerations” is simply a manner of speaking that responds to the officially established methodology of writing this type of thesis. In reality, there is no end, but a temporary stop or plateau to present what has been interpreted during the specific time-lapse and at the specific location and amongst the specific participants of this research. It is clear that whatever is presented here as a manner of conclusion continues changing and evolving; i.e., the so-termed conclusions are merely a representation of what was interpreted at the particular research time period and at the particular context of the research field, without the intention of proposing that such remarks are meant as final or conclusive. Likewise, whatever has been interpreted by the author from her exchange in the research field, responds to such particular situation and to those particular persons; others shall have different interpretations of what seems to be the same issue.

Bearing in mind the caveat above, it may be concluded that this research on language narratives amongst Creole-speaking Spanish teachers from Jamaica has led to the interpretation of a social narrative about Jamaican Creole, which underlies the social landscape and professional lives of the participating group, as natives of the island and as language teachers. On the other hand, the research field became a space where the participants and the researcher shared narratives particular to persons who happen to be sharing the same geographical space (Jamaica), as well as the same language teaching profession, which offered the opportunity for exchanging, comparing and contrasting stories and experiences about teaching Spanish as a foreign language within the rich, albeit controversial, language context of Jamaica. The process, therefore, lead to interpreting narratives that present language(s) as ever-changing, ever-evolving social creations whose role transcends the mere act of communication. As language teachers, the researcher as well as the participants shared the notion that language has the power to represent and enhance minds, which makes it a valuable tool to teach forms and expressive ways, while also becoming a constitutive medium through which narratives and mind discourses are presented and shaped.

The narratives studied during the research process allowed uncovering personal and social narratives that showed a rich multiplicity of stances, hence facilitating the creation of a perceptual map about the language situation in Jamaica, particularly in connection with Jamaican Creole, as perceived by the participating teachers of Spanish and the researcher. It may be safely said that, despite the disappointing though not completely unexpected initial setbacks on entering the research field, the entire process was rewarding and enriching, as it afforded the researcher the opportunity to witness a thoroughly rich language situation,

combining both her personal and previous research experience with that of the participants', sharing the common ground as teachers of Spanish within the unique context of Jamaica.

Interview discussions unveiled narratives around social as well as methodological issues. Participants reported the use of teaching practices that are geared towards the specific context of Jamaican classrooms, demonstrating a wide awareness about the surrounding language situation and, despite the lack of specific curricular guidelines<sup>111</sup>, resorting to more realistic and more adequate teaching practices that respond to such language situation. As reported by the participating teachers, their methodological choices are to be deemed as valid attempts to enhance learning among their students, even when such choices mostly end up increasing their workload.

A pervading narrative among the participating group relates to the general perception that there is a relationship between Creole-speaking and socioeconomic disadvantage; mostly based on the participants' personal experiences at different schools along the island. They also reported that Jamaican Creole seems to be more prevailing in rural areas and poor communities. The researcher's observations at the field confirmed most of the participants' reports; aside from a remarkable diversity of views in connection with language narratives; mostly reflecting traditionally accepted/imposed Western trends of thought.

Armed with the tools of a cartographic approach, the qualitative research allowed the researcher to observe and exchange within a space of human interaction that placed participants as active subjects of their personal and collective narratives, thus allowing the creation of the perceptual map discussed on Chapter 3. The methodology followed ruled the use of instruments and procedures leading towards the overarching goal, but the richness of the field demanded a completely flexible approach as it became obvious that it was paramount to create space for the multiple narratives that were weaved by participants, hence the need to start from questionnaires as preliminary forms of approaching the field, but soon to evolve into unstructured conversations, as the inputs were becoming more and more unpredictable as time went by.

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<sup>111</sup> The study of Spanish teachers' narratives as well as document review revealed the lack of specific curricular proposals contemplating the teaching of foreign languages within the language context of Jamaica. It was firmly communicated during interviews with Spanish teachers and other persons involved in foreign language teaching in Jamaica, who pointed out curricular failure to offer viable solutions to deal with the learning deficiencies hitherto observed among learners of Spanish. Such narrative did echo the researchers' narrative and helped reinforce her main motivation, which had originated from her personal observation of gaps and deficiencies in Spanish teaching and learning in Jamaica.

The research had been initially designed with some specific objectives in mind. The researcher's choice of following a cartographic approach combined with a rhizomatic analytical perspective implied entering the field with no predetermined expectations, however it should be pointed out that the responses to the initial exploratory questionnaire, by facilitating a view of what was possible, helped in calibrating the compass that directed the movement into and through the research field. At the field, it was possible to observe and interpret a portion of the prevailing narratives amongst participants, based on their personal narratives as interpreted during the exchanges motivated by the interviews. The process also revealed certain language attitudes which participants demonstrated in their roles as Jamaican Creole users and as teachers of Spanish as a foreign language in Jamaica. Such attitudes, conceptions and perceptions were interpreted as extensions of social narratives, which were observed during interviews with members of the Jamaican society, as well as media publications and social network debates.

Participants' narratives, as interpreted by the researcher, were also manifested through the teaching practices, methodological strategies and tactics participants communicated during the discussions. Overall, the discussions held during interviews and unstructured conversations allowed interpreting individual, collective and social narratives, interwoven with underlying language attitudes among participants; which in most part, and not surprisingly, aligned with the wider attitudinal aspect in Jamaica mapped by the Jamaica Language Unit Study (2005). This fact simply corroborates that, as members of the Jamaican society, the Spanish teachers participating in this research also shared traditional attitudes customary among their elders, peers and their social contexts. Hence, completing this target helped broaden the notions grasped during the research process, thus allowing a more revealing perceptual mapping.

Participants' narratives placed them within a specific space as members of the Jamaican society, but also their narratives as Spanish teachers blended smoothly with the personal and professional narrative of the researcher, who despite being a naturalized Jamaican, has been a professional Spanish teacher living in the island for over 20 years. Such privileged position on the part of the researcher's allowed a closer observation and interpretation of the field and the creation of a perceptual map about language perceptions and conceptions amongst Jamaican Spanish teachers based on the interpretation of personal and shared narratives amongst Spanish teachers, which were triangulated through interviews and conversations with other Jamaicans, and through the interpretation of messages pouring out of media programmes, publications, and social network debates. The entire research process became a rewarding moment that



allowed creating knowledge on account of the rich and multiple stances between participants, other non-participants and the researcher herself.

It goes without saying that, just as any study involving human beings, there were moments of doubt and frustration, since it was no easy task getting access to data sources, particularly for some interviews and access to certain teacher's training educational institutions. The initial research plan of developing the research among teachers-in-training (particularly students who are still in school, but soon to enter the field as professional Spanish teachers) and entering teachers' training institutions resulted a major setback: it was impossible to obtain permission from the relevant authorities at the institutional level. Nonetheless, the contingency plan, of interviewing Spanish teachers who are already working, was set in motion, facilitating the process with abundant and willing sources among teachers who are currently working at the secondary level. Contributions about their experiences were remarkable, not only because they provided more substantial and significant first-hand data, but also because of the moments of memorable human and professional interaction created by the willingness and good disposition of all participants. There are no words to thank them for their openness, honesty and kindness.

Nevertheless, despite the initial setbacks and looking back into the process, it is clear that negative events and difficulties did contribute to improve the process, as it ended up producing better outcomes as the research process neared its final stage. One valid lesson from the process was the understanding that, undertaking a research which 'objects' are far from being *objects* will bring forth a field full of subjectivities normally attached to human beings. It becomes an incredibly cumbersome task, trying to map the narratives that characterise a group of human beings; especially if such mapping requires some type of intervention or intrusion in personal and group agendas or personal and group life projects, regardless of how substantial they are for achieving the overarching goal set for the research.

### **Contribution and possible application of the research outcomes**

This study may prove useful because it presents a perceptual map based on personal, collective and social narratives existing amongst the participating Jamaican Spanish teachers, as well as amongst several other Jamaicans. Jamaican Spanish teachers' narratives about the language situation in Jamaica, and particularly in regards to the situation of Jamaican Creole, led to understanding how professional language teachers are able to deal with such situation on a daily basis and rethink their teaching strategies and tactics in order to eliminate or, at least, reduce and/or soften the barriers created by the often ignored language existing amongst many (if not most) Jamaican learners. The study has led to understanding how the participating

Spanish teachers manage to negotiate their way through such situation to meet their students' learning needs.

Despite being a plateau amid the multiple possible interpretations the Jamaican language situation may have, the study does present ideas and notions that may be applicable to the teaching of Spanish in Jamaica, particularly because it offers the views of those engaged in actual teaching practices, as interpreted by the researcher. But the study does not stop at the point concerning actual teaching/learning specifically relating to Spanish language. It widens its scope to include narratives about the social landscape of Jamaican language that transcend their relation with the teaching of Spanish, to include contextual matters surrounding the learners; all of which do have an impact on the manner in which Jamaican learners and teachers process language information and, ultimately, learn and teach foreign languages such as Spanish.

The study has built a perceptual map which may provide ideas for language practitioners to create or enhance teaching tools perhaps more adequate to the actual needs of Jamaican learners, by making Spanish teachers more aware of a reality at times taken for granted and left undealt with, despite the observed impact such language situation has on the learning process in general, and Spanish learning in particular. Finally, the study may be regarded as one, albeit small, contribution to the vastly rich multiplicity of options, but noticeably limited literature, available to practitioners so that they can reconsider and reshape their notions about Jamaican Creole, as well as their language teaching strategies, particularly in respect to improving Spanish learning quality amongst Jamaican learners.

The findings of this study may be seen as a new narrative emerging from the multiple narratives encountered/interpreted at the field; narratives that portray Jamaican sociocultural worldviews, group identities (Spanish teachers), personal identities (Jamaican Creole users), in their mingling with the researcher's personal narrative, all embedded within particular sociocultural contexts. The cartographic analytical approach and the rhizomatic perspective applied during this research led to viewing participants and their field as complex, diverse and multiple; hence the understanding that these findings are just a momentary plateau in this type of qualitative educational research, which brings forth the need for further research.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Interviews, conversations, direct observations, reading of media publications and social network debates, as well as diary annotations proved extremely useful in attaining an understanding of the matters surrounding the teaching of Spanish within the social and language context of Jamaica. The experiences lived at the field, the contact with willing

participants, who became true subjects and helped give direction to this research, contributed to enhance the understanding about the multiple realities and experiences of and around language learners, as well as their impact on the teaching/learning process. True to the overarching goal of studying language conceptions and perceptions amongst Jamaican Spanish teachers, the resulting perceptual map offers a panoramic view in terms of the language situation in Jamaica and its relation with the teaching of Spanish. However, one of the many lingering questions that would need a response through a future research would be: what Spanish are we talking about?

As hinted during the discussion, no reference was found in regards to a differentiation of Spanish varieties. There is no discussion or terminology in the curricular documents, and teachers seem to be unaware of such diversity. Spanish is seen as an abstract notion, mostly approached from a generic lexico-grammatical point of view, but so far no study has been made concerning the choice of the Spanish language varieties and no reference is made to the variety in lexico-grammatical systems that characterise the use of such ‘language’. Such situation leaves several questions pending for future research, as it would be pertinent to delve into the narratives surrounding the choice of language varieties, as well as the annoying realization that some varieties seem to be preferred over others. In Jamaica, the National Curriculum for Spanish (2016) directs the use and/or enhancement of communicative language teaching strategies<sup>112</sup>, which brings forth the need for future studies to deal with the matter of the Spanish language varieties and the justification for such choice.

Two other matters that may prove of interest for future research involve the issue of Jamaican Creole orality as a factor facilitating the learning of Spanish in Jamaica. Participating teachers hinted at the fact that Jamaican Creole users may find it easier to learn the Spanish sound and grammatical systems because of their similarities with Jamaican Creole. It would be interesting to delve into a study of the nature and socio-historical aspects of Jamaican Creole orality, and its implications for learning Spanish. The second possible topic of research concerns the matter of gender-language correlation, particularly the issue of masculinity and femininity as gender markers and as drivers for language choice during social interactions.

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<sup>112</sup> According to Errol Haughton, Acting MOE Education Officer for Modern Languages (e-mail exchange).

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## APENDIX A: EXPLORATORY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Introduction

The following questionnaire has the object of determining ideal participants for my research. Based on the topic, **Spanish Teachers in Jamaica and the Impact of Creole: Perceptions and Practices**, I would like to determine those participants who would render the most accurate information about the topic being researched. Please, before you delve into the Questionnaire, answer the following preliminary questions which include some personal details necessary for the sole purpose of selecting specific participants.

a) Are you a Spanish teacher currently working at a Jamaican school?

YES ----- NO -----

b) Are you included within the 25-35 age group?

YES ----- NO -----

c) Do you have 2-10 years of (Spanish) teaching experience?

YES ----- NO -----

If you have responded YES to all the questions, you may proceed with the questionnaire. If not, I thank you for your kind support but still would appreciate any comment you may have about the topic of research and that you consider may help to enhance the knowledge on this matter.

**Comments:**

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### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

In a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your level of agreement with the following statements? (5 would stand for the highest degree of agreement). You may provide brief comments explaining your choice.

1. Jamaica Creole is an essential language for the learning of Spanish in Jamaica.

1	2	3	4	5

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Creole speakers may be considered as bilingual individuals; which facilitates their learning of Spanish.

1	2	3	4	5

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Departing from the premise that Creole is the mother tongue of most Jamaican learners, the teaching of Spanish should first and foremost involve the use of Creole concepts, grammar elements and ways of understanding language.

1	2	3	4	5

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Spanish teachers who are Creole speakers can be more effective than others who are not versed in that language.

1	2	3	4	5

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. If based on grammatical comparisons, Creole should be the language used as reference to compare with Spanish, instead of English.

1	2	3	4	5

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. Looking a commonalities between the grammatical structures of Spanish and Jamaican Creole, it may be wise to affirm that Creole grammar facilitates the learning of Spanish grammar.

1	2	3	4	5

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. Using the elements of orality that characterise Jamaican Creole may be more effective in Spanish lessons than aspects of English literature and grammar.

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly provide an e-mail address and a phone number for the feedback.

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU!

## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS AND SOURCES

NAME	PROFESSION	EXPERIENCE	LOCATION IN JAMAICA	TYPE OF SCHOOL
Dane	Spanish Teacher	5 years	<b>Mandeville</b> South-West Central. <b>St. Ann</b> North-East	Urban All Female School
Keisha	Spanish Teacher	5 years	<b>May Penn</b> South Jamaica	Rural Co-Educational
Kent	Spanish Teacher	10 Years	<b>Clarendon</b> South –Central	Rural Co-Educational
Maverick	Spanish Teacher	10 years	<b>St. Elizabeth</b> South-West Jamaica	Rural All Male School
Mariposa	Spanish Teacher, Head of Language Department	17 years	<b>Mandeville</b> South-West Central	Urban Co-Educational
Mika	Spanish Teacher	6 years	<b>Montego Bay.</b> North.	Rural All Male School
Sandra	Spanish Teacher	11 years	<b>Kingston</b> South-East Jamaica. <b>Clarendon</b> Bellefield <b>St. Elizabeth</b> South West, Jamaica	Urban Co-Educational, Rural Co-Educational Rural, All-Female School
GOVERNMENT/ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVES				
Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen	Permanent Secretary		Kingston	Office of the Prime Minister. Before, Ministry of Education
Martha Luisa Corbett-Baugh	Education Officer, Modern Languages		Kingston	Ministry of Education
Errol Haughton	Spanish Teacher/Education Officer		Kingston	Ministry of Education
Prof. Hubert Devonish	Head of Department Jamaica Language Unit		Kingston	University of the West Indies
MEDIA SOURCES/SOCIAL NETWORKS/etc.				
Jamaica Gleaner. Television Programmes: Hill’Gully Ride, Talk Yuh Talk, Smile Jamaica (TV Programme). Facebook. Whatsapp. Facebook Messenger. E-Mails				
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, GUIDELINES, ETC.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ National Curriculum for Spanish</li> <li>✓ Jamaica College CURRICULUM GUIDES for FIRST FORM/GRADE 7. (December, 2008)</li> <li>✓ Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.) Curriculum Guide. Grade 7 – 9</li> <li>✓ SPANISH UNITS OF WORK. OVERVIEW OF SUBJECT CONTENT GRADE 4. Ministry of Education. Jamaica</li> <li>✓ Helicopter View of Grades 1 - 6. Ministry of Education. Jamaica.</li> <li>✓ Language Education Policy. Ministry of Education. Jamaica.</li> <li>✓ <i>The Language Attitude Survey of Jamaica</i>. Data Analysis. The Jamaican Language Unit. University of the West Indies, Mona</li> <li>✓ CHARTER ON LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN THE CREOLE-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN. Kingston, Jamaica. 2011</li> </ul>				

## ANNEX A

**Haiti's government announced a new policy to educate students in Kreyòl.** Published by: Peter Dizikes | MIT News Office. July 20, 2015. <http://news.mit.edu/2015/3-questions-michel-degraff-haiti-teaching-kreyol-0720>

This month, Haiti's government announced a new policy to educate students in Kreyòl, the native language of most Haitians, rather than French, the language traditionally used in schools. Introducing Kreyòl-language instruction has been a cause of Michel DeGraff, a professor of linguistics at MIT and a native of Haiti. MIT News recently discussed the policy shift with him.

### **Q. Why is it important to help Haitian students learn in Kreyòl?**

A. Research has shown that we learn best in the languages we speak most fluently. In Haiti, at least 95 percent of the population is fluent in Kreyòl only. The use of any other language of instruction is a recipe for academic failure. This failure becomes a national tragedy when it repeats itself generation after generation, with Kreyòl-speaking children being taught in French.

According to research in cognitive science, becoming a good reader involves a "virtuous triangle" that seamlessly connects three sets of linguistic representations: letters on the page ("graphemes"), sounds in the corresponding language ("phonemes"), and word meanings ("semantics"). This triangle is most effective when all three—graphemes, phonemes, and semantics—pertain to the reader's native language.

When Haitian children who speak only Kreyòl are taught to read in French (often by teachers who themselves are not fluent in French), the graphemes on the page relate to one language (French) while the phonemes and semantics in the child's mind relate to another language (Kreyòl). So the triangle is "broken," and the child, at best, will manage to parrot French sounds without adequate understanding of the text.

The matter is actually more complicated, because French words often sound somewhat like Kreyòl even when the corresponding meanings are substantially distinct. This "broken triangle" is the scientific explanation for one key factor underlying the massive failure of Haiti's school system: Most Haitian children are never given the opportunity to become fluent readers. They never learn to read well, so they can't read to learn.

Thanks to a National Science Foundation grant, the data that I have collected at the Lekòl Kominotè Matènwa (LKM), a school in La Gonave, Haiti, show that Haitian children who are taught in Kreyòl achieve much higher learning gains than their counterparts who learn in French. Once children have strong foundations in their native language, they are better equipped to learn all academic subjects, including second languages such as French.

Last year (2014), all 25 sixth-graders at LKM passed the official exam administered by the state (compared with an overall success rate of 71 percent). What's less measurable, but also profoundly important, is the dignity of these Haitian children at LKM, whose joyful creativity is set free when they can learn in their native Kreyòl.

As for mathematics and science, the logical thinking that is necessary to succeed in these fields requires a great deal of reasoning and communication. The effective use of language is, thus, an essential ingredient there as well. In the NSF-funded MIT-Haiti Initiative, we've documented how teachers and students perform better when pedagogical resources, especially those for learning science and mathematics, are in Kreyòl.

### **Q. What are the specifics of this new agreement?**

A. This is the first agreement between Haiti's Ministry of National Education and Professional Training (MENFP) and the newly created Haitian Creole Academy ("Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen," or AKA), of which I am a founding member; AKA was inaugurated in December 2014. AKA's mandate includes the establishment of conventions around the use of Kreyòl and the promotion of Kreyòl in all sectors of society.

The core objective of this new agreement between MENFP and AKA is to further promote Kreyòl, and Kreyòl speakers' linguistic rights. MENFP and AKA have now created a formal framework to work together to expand the use of Kreyòl as a teaching tool at all levels of Haiti's system, from kindergarten to university. This also entails the standardization of Kreyòl writing, and the training of teachers for instruction of, and in, Kreyòl.



I am both excited and anxious about the concrete steps to implement this agreement. In Haiti's history we've had too many laws, decrees, and agreements that have never been implemented or whose implementation has been sabotaged from the get-go. Take, say, Article 5 of Haiti's 1987 constitution, which made Kreyòl an official language alongside French and which recognized Kreyòl as the sole language that binds the Haitian people together. Also consider Article 40 of the same constitution, which requires the government to communicate information about all state matters in both Kreyòl and French. These articles of the constitution are violated on a daily basis by the government, which most often—and especially in writing—communicates in French only. The Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen itself, which was decreed in the 1987 constitution, took 27 years to become reality.

However, MENFP Minister Nesmy Manigat has shown an extraordinary amount of political will to promote Kreyòl. He is wholeheartedly supporting AKA and its agenda, as shown in the signing, on July 8, of this MENFP-AKA agreement. As he explained at the signing ceremony, Haitian schools have for too long wasted the potential of too many students by ignoring their native Kreyòl, and he trusts that this agreement will help ensure that all Haitian students have the same opportunity to succeed in school.

As a member of the administrative council of AKA, I am helping set up a workshop series on the standardization of Kreyòl writing. We've had an official Kreyòl alphabet since 1979. But there are many loose threads remaining when it comes to establishing a standard writing system. Once these conventions are set in place—a major task that will necessarily take time—then we'll start working on teacher-training workshops to spread the standardized writing system among teachers, students, and the general population.

**Q. How does your understanding of Kreyòl as a linguist undercut some of the justifications offered in the past for French-language use and instruction?**

A. One reason that has been offered to justify excluding Kreyòl from formal education is the claim that Kreyòl is a structurally lesser language that does not afford the same capacity as French to express complex concepts in science, mathematics, philosophy, and so on. One dogma in linguistics is that Creole languages are the world's "simplest" languages because of their origins from "Pidgin" languages. Some linguists have even gone so far as to compare Creole languages to the earliest human languages spoken by *Homo sapiens*.

My linguistic research has argued against such claims, which I've given the umbrella term of "Creole exceptionalism." I've shown in a series of research articles that such claims are empirically and theoretically untenable. The development paths and structures of Creole languages are on a par with their counterparts for languages such as English and French. My linguistics research shows that English and French, given their "hybridity" and structural distance from their respective ancestor languages (Proto-Germanic and Latin), could be considered more "Creole" than Haitian Kreyòl! Really, there is no linguistic reason why Creole languages should be excluded from the classroom—or from the family of "normal" human languages.

In addition, the MIT-Haiti Initiative has provided living proof that Kreyòl is perfectly usable as a language of instruction for advanced mathematics, physics, biology, and more. Better yet, the use of Kreyòl in the classroom improves the quality of teaching. We've been documenting such improvement with Haitian students and faculty who have participated in our NSF-funded work in Haiti since 2010.

So, indeed, the use of Kreyòl should be embraced as a powerful tool for development at all levels of Haiti's education system and beyond, in every sector of Haitian society.

## ANNEX B.

**The language of instruction – Jamaican Creole or Standard Jamaican English?**

Esther Tyson, Contributor. Published: Sunday | June 2, 2013 | 12:00 AM. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130602/focus/focus4.html>

*By 2030 every child in our country will have the best learning environment. Each person will leave school at the secondary level with at least five CXC subjects including English, mathematics and a foreign language (grades 1-3), and will have a working skill. (Vision 2030)*

**Amid the present debate and controversy concerning the outcomes of our education system and the benefits accrued to teachers, is a concern that I have. This concern relates to the decreasing thrust to teach Standard Jamaican English (SJE) at our tertiary institutions and rather to focus on the use of Jamaican Creole (JC) in the classrooms.**

It is generally acknowledged that the world is a global village. The possibility of travel to various nations has exceeded the expectations of Jamaicans even 20 years ago. Jamaicans are working in diverse corners of the earth. This means that we need to prepare our people to communicate with persons from different nations.

Added to this is the reality that we do not have the ability, in present economic situations, to provide jobs for the many students who are leaving tertiary institutions. The best way to prepare our students to compete globally is to teach a language that is the acknowledged language of business and commerce globally, which is English.

Our training institutions acknowledge that our children coming into school at the early childhood stage and primary level will use JC as their first language. Our teachers, however, need to be trained and become adept at helping our children to acquire SJE as a second language. This should become the language of instruction. In this way, our students will become immersed in the language.

**Immersion situation**

This is particularly important since there are many homes where children are not exposed to hearing SJE spoken. The schools, therefore, need to provide that immersion situation, along with formal instruction, to make successful acquisition of English aptitude possible.

Even though this approach should be self-evident, it is not happening in many of our schools. Why? Many of our universities and teacher-training institutions are not ensuring that all teachers of English are trained to teach English as a second language. Therefore, as I go into some classrooms, I hear many teachers conversing with the students in JC freely. On one occasion, a young English teacher at the secondary level was asked why she did not use SJE. Her response was because the students said they would not understand her.

In other situations, I have heard primary-school children correcting teachers' use of JC instead of SJE. It seems, then, that we can no longer depend on the teacher to be a standard of how SJE should be spoken. If homes, therefore, do not provide the environment within which SJE is learnt; if the media cannot be depended on to present models of how to use the language; and if schools cannot provide examples of how the language is to be used, how do we expect our children to be prepared linguistically to compete in the global market?

How do we expect to meet the target of Vision 2030? How do we expect the CSEC English results to improve?

This comment from the **Report on Candidates' Work in the CSEC Examination May/June 2012 English A General Proficiency Examination** sheds light on some of the issues:

*"It is clear that large numbers of students across the Caribbean have not mastered the use of Standard English. There continues to be interference from dialects and patois used throughout the region; to these have been added the slangs originating from dancehall music and the North American ghettos and the abbreviations familiar to users of the messaging media of modern technology. For students who almost abhor reading, some methods must be found to encourage correct use of the language."*

We know that only 46 per cent of the students that sat the English A Paper in 2012 achieved a passing grade. We need to be reminded that this is not the percentage of the complete cohort of grade 11. This percentage is based on those who were permitted to sit the examinations. There are many

students who were not allowed to sit the examinations by schools that screen students. This means that the percentage pass rate for the grade 11 cohort is much lower.

### **Assist with English**

If we are serious about preparing our students to compete in the global marketplace, we must begin to address this problem of no other country being able to communicate with our students who have the facility to only speak Jamaican Creole upon leaving secondary school. Our universities need to not only invest money in the study of Jamaican Creole but also assist such students in being competent in speaking and writing English.

One sad testament to how off track we are in this matter is reflected in the state of what used to be a useful and dynamic Writing Centre at the University of the West Indies, Mona. This centre catered to UWI students who needed help in preparing their assignments for submission to their teachers. Postgraduate students would be paid a stipend to dedicate some time to meeting with undergraduates to guide them with their essay writing.

I thought this was a well-needed service since complaints were often heard about the insufficient competence of university students in writing Standard Jamaican English. Yet this centre was closed because of lack of financial funding.

As a nation, we need to take another look at the currently popular approach to teaching our students in Jamaican Creole without assisting them to transition from our native language to SJE. There are too many teachers in the classrooms who have adopted the view that it is not necessary for them to be competent in SJE and, therefore, do not make an effort to set a standard for the children in speaking the language.

In addition, our teacher-training institutions need to place a strong emphasis on the teachers of English, learning the rules of JC, and how to help our students move from using our native language to understanding the rules of SJE and becoming adept at using it.

In addition, we need to become a nation where reading is encouraged. That discussion, however, is for another time.

I recommend that all teachers, especially teachers at the primary and secondary levels, use Dr Velma Pollard's book, **From Jamaican Creole to Standard English: A Handbook for Teachers**, as a guide in teaching students to understand the rules of JC and how to move to understanding and using SJE. It will help our students to improve their outcomes in the CSEC English A examination.

*Esther Tyson is an educator. Email feedback to [columns@gleanerjm.com](mailto:columns@gleanerjm.com) and [esther.tyson@gmail.com](mailto:esther.tyson@gmail.com).*

### **COMMENTS**

- Our children **MUST** indeed be taught English to the highest standard – both speaking and writing. This is the world in which we live. Yesterday it was Latin, today it's English. Later on it may be Chinese. At the same time we must not denigrate our Jamaican Creole. This is Jamaica, land we love.
- Will Jamaican college graduates who have not mastered standard English find employment in the corporate world of western countries?. Quite unlikely. Will they find jobs as low-level factory workers? Most likely.
- Shouldn't the focus be on having Jamaican graduates work in the Jamaican corporate world, instead of sending them off to other Western countries?
- Mrs. Tyson, exactly who is promoting the JC as a language of instruction to the exclusion of SJE? If immersion worked, explain to me why so many Jamaicans haven't mastered BOTH JC and SJE? As an educator, should you not be more up to speed on linguistic theory and more importantly the finding and recommendations of linguists like Prof. Hubert Devonish and indeed, my own wife, Dr. Alison Irvine? What these academics have long recommended is a **BILINGUAL** approach to instruction; and not the displacement of SJE by JC. What occurs in schools is the equivalent of teaching Portuguese-speaking students in Spanish, and then expecting these students to (a) operate with the same level of mastery as native Spanish speakers; and or (b) to acquire mastery of Spanish by "immersion". It simply doesn't work Mrs. Tyson, and never has.
- Thank you, Hilaire Sobers. Its exhausting to argue these issues with people who are steeped in colonial ideology and have no knowledge of the science of language or effective and current methodology to teach a language to non-native speakers. You can trust that every time you have s

discussion about education in Jamaica, someone will try to get some attention by blaming Jamaican patois. Tired of these people!

➤ speak for yourself boss man. I am sure you are around my age so how exactly did you become so eloquent? And why not fix things where you are and leave us here to sort our selves out?

➤ Mr. Sobers, the answer to your first question is easy:

nobody is interested in mastering JC. And Sir, can you give me an example of someone in Jamaica who speaks 'good' Jamaican Creole? And please, don't tell me

about Carolyn Cooper! I am sure that if she wants to 'seriously' express some profound belief she is going to 'switch' to English. The best speakers of JC, in my opinion, are those Jamaicans who have not had a lot of exposure to the educational system. For 'educated' people who frequently used JC, certain expressions, words, and pronunciations are shunned, lest they are ridiculed for 'chatting too bad' or being from 'certain paat a di country'.

➤ I think a better approach to getting students to master JSE is to let them speak it more often in class. Jamaican students tend to give answers to questions in one word, or few word sentences. Apart from in church, this is the only place where most Jamaican children will get a chance to practice English! So why don't we give them that chance? Sir, do you realize that the average Jamaican 14 year old probably writes better English than his American counterpart? And many children of Spanish speaking parents in America speak the language with ease, yet are not able to read or write it.

➤ I don't want to make light of the effort that your wife, Carolyn Cooper, and other academics are making to get us to be proud of our mother tongue. But Sir, I urge you and the others who are involved in this venture to consider seriously what you are doing.

➤ I saw a man the other day in his overalls; he was carrying a ladder; there were paint stains all over his clothes. He was doing a job on a house – he was a graduate of one of the most prestigious high schools in Jamaica. He was not making much money. Was it the language barrier?

➤ Guest it could also be that a High School Education just does not cut it anymore. You need more than just a High school education these days. Not knocking just the High school education as there are so many entrepreneurs that did not even go to High School that are successful and making great money.

➤ When the Minister and/or Ministry of Education eventually come to the realization that the children and people of Jamaica are bright enough to formally learn and/or acquire competence in both Standard Jamaican English (SJE) and Jamaican Creole (JC) and implement the relevant policy and actions to promulgate dissemination of same, then this debate will no longer be necessary.

➤ Why is Jamaica the only country that needs use patois to teach English. Interestingly this suggestion is always coming loudest from those rebellious natured set that have other anti-colonial wars fighting.

➤ Hasn't this text, or others very similar to it, been on the curriculum for a long time now? Since 1997, the ESL approach has been employed in the training of teachers and teachers have been exposed to these language methods for a long time!

➤ Pollard's book while useful is too parochial to be used in isolation. Its use would have to be supplemented by other ESL texts that have been published in the region.

➤ Sometimes I feel we are putting dust on Jamaican Creole, we are disapproving it from school, also every important parts in our society (and I thought Jamaica patois was our National language) but why should we feel rejected for speaking it. Sure having English and Español as our official(Français,manderin,Portuguese are slipping up) but let's not forget the language we spoke as children.

### ANNEX C.

**No need to promote Patois.** Published: Wednesday | March 9, 2016 | 12:00 AM Eugena Robinson.  
<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/commentary/20160309/no-need-promote-patois>

The **Sunday Gleaner** of March 6, 2016 carried a very compelling article ('End prejudice against Patois) by Professor Hubert Devonish, coordinator of the Language Unit at UWI, Mona. He implores the incoming minister of education to consider ending the prejudice against the Patois.

I struggled to decipher the inset at the beginning of St Luke's Gospel in the article, and I gave up eventually. Our Jamaican dialect is an oral expression and we do not see the need for learning to see it in print. I will agree that children whose parents do not communicate in Standard Jamaican English (SJE) are at a disadvantage, particularly when the school does not set an acceptable standard in communication.

I am a retired educator with special skills in early childhood education. In those early years, basic-school teachers were taught how to communicate. Workbooks were not known and instructions were given in SJE.

In today's classrooms, the focus has shifted to raising the literacy scores and teachers are now drilling students with their eyes on the clock for speed and accuracy.

I still observe classrooms where teachers do not communicate with their children in a manner that the children think and give reasons in SJE. Answers are usually one word, and activities are workbook style of filling in a single word. The truth is, teachers find these activities easier to mark, as their focus is only on single words added to pre-structured sentences.

Classroom practices need to return to building language skills, as those done by my past Mico principals who ensured that we communicated in Standard English, even in the playground. I have visited teachers' colleges and listened to students who, outside their classrooms, communicate only in Patois. What are these teachers taking into the classroom for our disadvantaged children to emulate? The real danger is in the pre-primary, primary schools and the former secondary schools.

#### DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

I spend many days in my family bookstore, which is strategically placed in the path of basic, primary, preparatory and high schools. To hear a student communicate to a fellow student in SJE requires an immediate attention from me. The majority of young parents scold their children openly in the crudest form. It is significant to note that the children who chatter in our Jamaican Patois understand instantly when a question is asked in SJE.

It is really not necessary to consider promoting Patois through any funding and special programmes. Even if the strategies work in Haiti, I do not think it is a real threat in Jamaica. Schools are not doing the right things for our disadvantaged children. We need to change the common practices in classroom teaching, in focusing on the child and not just the curriculum.

Coordinators of the Grade Six Achievement Test must move to implement an oral examination while getting parents in workshops to train them in communicating with their children. Churches can play a great part in this. The day when children are bright but they fail the oral-language test will cause parents to sit up.

Patois is here to stay. It identifies us as true Jamaicans. Sometimes, the expressions in Patois were the best and most effective way of stating one's true feelings. I have abandoned the Patois Bible, because it takes too much of my energy in repeating the sentence before I hear the real meaning, then I say, "Oh!"

Eugena Robinson is an early childhood consultant and  
 operator of Books, Stationery and Supplies in Port Maria.  
 Email feedback to [columns@gleanerjm.com](mailto:columns@gleanerjm.com) and [r\\_eugena@yahoo.com](mailto:r_eugena@yahoo.com).

#### COMMENTS

- Most Jamaicans will learn patois on their own with little or no teaching but we do need to learn to communicate on an international stage.
- If you go to Limon, Costa Rica. Boca Del Toro, Panama, Bluefields Nicaragua or even the Providencia Islands owned by Colombia you will find that Patois is quite useful for communication.
- If I say, I hear you, is that Patwa ?..

➤ The esteemed lady and former educator (thanks for your service to our children) might not have intended it but her reasoning is dripping with contempt and condescension for speakers of Jamaican Creole (AKA Patois). Why should parents contort their tongues to speak Standard English to their children. And then at the end of her letter she says some feelings can only be effectively expressed in Patois and that's what makes us Jamaican. However, one reason why parents use their first language, their mother tongue is because the feelings and emotions they wish to express is best done in Patois! Why should parents be subjected to the process of learning another language (in workshops!) on how to speak to their children? Which parents will be selected to do this? Parents from Norbrook? Beverley Hills, Cherry Gardens and Russell Heights? Stony Hill? This madness. Is this how a language is best learned? In workshops once or twice a week? The reason you can't read the Patois Bible Madam is no fault of the language. It is the fault of (y)our unfamiliarity and illiteracy in written Patois. I imagine if you chose to apply yourself and educate yourself in the phonics and literacy of Patois you would soon become a fluent and accurate reader in that wonderful language. If Patois is as wonderful as you write at the end of your letter, then you should help us developing it into a written language. We might even get a Standard Jamaican Creole out of the whole process.

➤ I find it hard to believe an educator could not teach herself to read Patois. I am no educator and I read it just fine. The problem is obviously the lack of desire. You state Patois is here to stay, this shows absolute ignorance of how languages interact. Patois has always been endangered, even more so with the flooding of society with American media. But that is besides the point. The reason for ignoring Patois is always of test scores and money. While money is to a certain extent important, how does it compare to self-respect and self-worth? How can an educator be so disparaging towards the children he is supposed to help? Chattering? Chattering is what animals do. Humans communicate, but the negative opinion that views children as animals due to their choice of language is there for all to see. There are thousands of Jamaicans on this planet walking around with scars from verbal abuse and physical abuse - attacks on their language. Is this ok to an educator? Obviously it is. Because all Jamaicans know what abuse is dished out under the pretext of test scores and future job opportunities. But that doesn't matter to most of our educators it seems. What really are they doing? Educating or brain washing via torture? It is exactly for this reason that Patois needs to be promoted. It is not about money. It is about human rights and equality of expression. In 2016 it is time to stop treating members of our population like beasts and cruffs because of their choice of expression. The Patois issue in Jamaica is our equivalent of the race issue in America. Patois speakers have a right to be treated with human dignity and equality. They have a right to stand with their backs and necks erect without feeling the whip of society on their backs. They have a right to life and liberty. So it is full time our false educators and society gi dem a blai (bligh) and change society into one that views Patois as a second language, not as broken speech.

➤ Patois is not a language. It cannot get you anywhere in life. Why didn't you write your post in Patois? While Patois is a part of our identity as a people, it cannot and will not help us with the advancement that we seek. I know that people all over the world take classes in Spanish, French, Portugese, Mandarin etc. Never heard of anyone taking Patois classes.

➤ It is broken speech, an it soun ignorant no hell

➤ And you just used it. What should I infer from that?

➤ "Broken (S) Peach"

➤ Having read your diatribe, I am certain you are either an idiot or have no goodwill for Jamaicans. Once and for all Patois is not a written language. Where is the standard grammar, syntax, and spelling.

# ANNEX D.

**End prejudice against Patois.** Hubert Devonish. Published: Sunday | March 6, 2016 | 12:00 AM  
<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/focus/20160306/hubert-devonish-end-prejudice-against-patois>

**Dear new Minister of Education,**

**World Mother Language Day was celebrated globally on February 21. The day passed without notice in Jamaica. Is this because, for the government, the media and for those with social, political and economic influence, the issue of mother language/mother tongue does not arise since, 'unlike those benighted countries in Africa and the Pacific, thank God, we speak English in Jamaica?' But, do we?**

Well, in a nationwide survey conducted by the Jamaican Language Unit in 2006, 36 per cent of the sample surveyed demonstrated no ability to describe a simple everyday object using spoken English. By contrast, 83 per cent were able to do so using the Jamaican language, 47 per cent demonstrating the ability to use both languages.

To mark World Mother Language Day, the Global Education Monitoring Group of the UNESCO put out a position paper with the deceptively simple title, 'If you don't understand, how can you learn?' The study looked, across many countries, at the impact that speaking as a home language the language used in the school has on children attaining an international minimum learning standard in reading. In all cases, children who spoke the language of the school as a home language did considerably better than those who did not. The effect varied across countries, with those whose home language was also the school language scoring between 15 and 30 per cent higher than those who did not have as a home language the language of the school.

We could apply a commonsensical approach to this issue, the one which was, according to a **Gleaner** news report of August 22, 2012, reportedly applied by Minister of Education Ronnie Thwaites. He was, at the time, commenting on the poor results of the CSEC English A examinations. He is reported to have exhorted Jamaicans to "stop glorifying Jamaican Patois" and encouraged all parents and teachers to speak and write 'correct English' in order to serve as good language models for children.

The Donald Trump-like simplicity of the reasoning flies in the face of the facts, of course. As we have already seen, 36 per cent of the population may not have any control of English and, of the 46 per cent who speak both English and Jamaican, the control of the former is likely to be rather weak.

Let us assume that teachers can and do maintain English as the sole language medium they use in the class. That minimal amount of exposure to English is unlikely to develop competence in English for a child who spends the bulk of his or her waking hours in a Jamaican Language speaking environment. In addition, members of a family or of a community speak a language which is most effective for communicating with those around them. There are very few communities in Jamaica where English could perform this role. For the honourable minister to blame members of a community who do not choose their speech forms so that their children can do better in school is as pointless as King Canute cursing the sea for not obeying his exhortation to come no further.

## WHAT DOES UNESCO SAY?

Perhaps the most important statement in the UNESCO paper is the recommendation that "at least six years of mother tongue instruction is needed to reduce learning gaps for minority language speakers (my emphasis)". The term 'minority' here is telling. It is usually minority groups whose languages are not used in schools and who find that their languages are discriminated against. Ironically, in Jamaica, the majority, made up of the 83 per cent who, according to the results of the study quoted above, speak Jamaican, are treated in the same discriminatory fashion as minorities in other countries. The language discrimination existing in Jamaica is, by that measure, even more unacceptable.

The Bilingual Education Project (BEP), run by the Jamaican Language Unit in Jamaican primary schools, pioneered the implementation of an approach which uses both English and Jamaican, alongside each other, as 1) languages for teaching and learning literacy, 2) mediums of oral instruction and classroom interaction, 3) subjects and 4) mediums for teaching and learning content subjects. The Biliterate Transitional Bilingual approach, modelled by the BEP, was stated in the Ministry of Education 2001 Language Education Policy, to be ideal for Jamaica. The same document, however, rejected the option as impractical.

Implementation took place in 2004-2008 for a cohort of children moving from grades one to four in that time period. The BEP had the official blessings of the Ministry of Education and sought to

demonstrate to the ministry as well as parents and the public, that the option was indeed practical and doable. The project had completing university students in linguistics translate the school textbooks into Jamaican.

A training programme was run for teachers to deliver lessons in both Jamaican and English, and to use the textbook material in both languages. An important new skill teachers had to acquire was familiarity with the Cassidy-JLU system for representing the Jamaican language in writing. Teacher training took place during the May-June period before implementation and during the life of the project.

### **HAITIAN EXAMPLE**

Ever since the 1980s, Haitian Creole has been recognised in the Constitution of Haiti as one of the two official languages of that country, alongside French, and as the language which unites all Haitians. In the period after the 2010 Haitian earthquake, under the leadership of Michel DeGraff, a Haitian professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA, got funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the USA to pioneer Haitian Creole language medium education in Haiti and to create online digital instructional materials for the teaching of science, technology, engineering, mathematics in Haitian Creole. This took place under what came to be known as the Haiti-MIT Initiative.

The research conducted within the framework of the project established that the use of the mother language produced children much better at their content subjects than those who learnt them in French. The mother language pupils were also superior in the learning of French.

This research activity was followed by a formal agreement in mid-2015, between the Haitian Ministry of National Education and the Haitian Creole Academy, founded by Michel DeGraff, to introduce Haitian Creole as the language of instruction throughout the education system and throughout the country. The Haiti-MIT Initiative has been involved in the training of teachers and the ongoing development of teaching materials in support of the 'creolisation' of the Haitian education system. The whole project has received overt statements of support from perhaps the best known linguist in the world, even better known for his political writing, Noam Chomsky, a colleague linguist of DeGraff at MIT.

Historically, Haiti has always led and Jamaica followed. Slavery was abolished in Haiti approximately 40 years before it was in Jamaica. The Republic of Haiti became independent some 158 years before Jamaica did. It is arguably because of Haiti's pioneering role in clearing the path for the rest of the Caribbean that it has been made to suffer an existence even more miserable than the rest of us.

Haiti, however, with the help of powerful allies in the First World, and institutions of considerable status and prestige, is finally doing the right thing by its citizens, implementing an education system that operates in the language of the vast majority of the Haitian population, Creole. Where nine million Haitians go, maybe three million Jamaicans might eventually follow, to a future of genuine and sustainable economic and social development.

Maybe, too, like Haiti, we will need to look for an overseas saviour, with initials more powerful and persuasive than those of the UWI, and the JLU (Jamaican Language Unit), and to foreign experts whose complexions are several shades lighter than the norm in Jamaica. Perhaps, the foreign creditors of Jamaica, as represented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), might wish to make a more enlightened language education policy a conditionality to further financial assistance for Jamaica. This might, from their perspective, help to create a more productive workforce and a growing Jamaican economy capable of repaying our foreign creditors.

Or perhaps, just this once, our policymakers might opt for home-grown solutions, based on solid research evidence, both international and local, coming from local institutions. Here is the opportunity to engage with local expertise, based firmly in international scholarship, in devising a language education policy that is appropriate to the language situation of Jamaica.

The new government of Jamaica, and the incoming minister of education, have a great opportunity. How about making a historical break with emotional and anecdotal approaches to decision-making on language education.

**Hubert Devonish is professor of linguistics and coordinator of the Jamaican Language Unit, UWI, Mona. Email feedback to [columns@gleanerjm.com](mailto:columns@gleanerjm.com).**



### COMMENTS

- He is right but will not succeed without political intervention. Most Jamaicans love money over people. If we have no problems killing for money, who is going to support Patois when the scaremongers claim it will bring about the apocalypse if we legitimise Patois. I will wait for the youth to stand up for it.
- There is no consensus as to what constitutes standard patois. I certainly don't speak the genre of patois they used to translate the gospels. So first of all there has to be consensus on standard use. This is what Kriyol in Haiti has over Jamaican patois. There has to be a national commission and consultations on this
- The writer of this article is as misguided as they come. He is no different from the ones who subscribe to utopian dreams. If you want to further isolate Jamaica from the rest of the world, change our mother tongue to that of broken English/Jamaican/Patois or whatever you want to call it. If our educational system was where it should be, most Jamaicans would have a command of the English language. Bermudans, Barbadians and Bahamians have managed to better command the English language, we can do the same. Seriously, if he were correct, why is it that the Bermudans, Barbadians and the Bahamians don't have the same reality? Broken French has mostly crippled Haitians. Are we going to transliterate all of our written references to that of Jamaican/Patois? That is foolhardy at best. In doing so, we will lose the benefits of economy by scale; if our written references have to be written specifically for us, we would have a very difficult time finding anything. Look at BlackBerry, only once in a blue moon do programmers create apps for BlackBerry—all for the fact that there are little or no BlackBerry users. When BlackBerry want app, they have to develop and maintain them for themselves—otherwise, they have to pay an exorbitant amount of money to developers.
- Our own indigenous language would be dead on arrival. Things would not be so bad if the so-called language was probably developed with little or no fragmentations. I find pleasure in communicating in our colloquial tongue; however, there is no need for it to become our native tongue. Such is a backward step and our country would pay dearly if we were shun English for Patois or whatever it would be ultimately called.

## ANNEX E.

**ROACH, Patrick. Teaching Patois undermines poor.** Published: Monday | April 18, 2011 | 12:00 AM.  
<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20110418/letters/letters3.html>

**THE EDITOR, Sir:**

The current debate over teaching Patois in schools is much ado about nothing. What do the pro-Patois-teaching proponents hope to gain from this? These are all well-educated professionals who could not have graduated with PhDs without being firmly grounded in the English language. So then, why shouldn't the children of the poor, who I suspect are the intended targets, not benefit likewise? I use that demographic because I can't see this being suggested of the children of the well-to-do. It is bad enough that the failure and dropout rate is what it is, why make it any worse?

**get practical**

I suggest that if we are so concerned about the achievements of our students, we should work together to find sound practical ways to teach English, which is our language of communication with the rest of the world. This means that the teachers' colleges will prepare teachers as specialists in English, which should be the language spoken in these classes, just like Spanish is spoken in a Spanish class. No one has to teach a Jamaican child Patois; that is natural. However, the international language is English, and we are part of the global village. We do not conduct our international businesses in Patois, we do so in a number of other major languages, including Chinese. If one should suggest we teach Chinese as a second language to English, I would say go for it, but not Patois. Patois is a very unique and colourful dialect and should be preserved and protected, but should not be used to limit the potential of our people.

**I am, etc.,**

**PATRICK ROACH**

**pgerry2001@yahoo.com**

**COMMENTS:**

➤ Guest • 6 years ago . All this back and forth and many of us do not understand that as we sit and debate there are kids attending school right here in Jamaica that CANNOT communicate in standard English. On occasion, I have had means to meet with primary school children and believe me when I tell you that most of them had no clue what I was saying to them unless I spoke patois. Do you believe that they are being exposed to standard English on a daily basis in the classrooms? Like Mr. Roach, I believe that using patois as the main vehicle of instruction will further retard the progression of the poor in Jamaica. Businesses when hiring will no longer be concerned about your address but more about your ability to communicate effectively in English. Entrepreneurs who wish to promote their businesses will be left behind if they cannot use English to sell their products and services, even if they choose to only operate in Jamaica. We must stop thinking of Jamaica as separate and apart from the world, we love our patois but it can't help us to compete out there.

➤ Grace • 6 years ago. Ditto! Mr. Roach, Ditto! I completely agree with this letter. Every word of it. They are undermining the poor. They are undermining the students. They are undermining their duties and responsibilities (as teachers and teachers of teachers), they are undermining the country. They are most of all, undermining the human spirit and human potential. They are flaunting with deliberate and further stagnation of growth and prosperity for the people of Jamaica, for years to come. If they depotentialize or blight a person's ability and functions by which to communicate (effectively and on as wide a scale as possible), it equates to intellectual and social shrinkage and social death. That there is this much tenacity behind such an ill-conceived, ill-advised suggestion, should be no less of an indication as to how bad things have gotten, how much erosion of the education system and society has taken place and how long the institutions in charge of teaching and learning have been delinquent, misguided and irresponsible.

➤ This is the most profound and most blatant case of 'DERELICTION OF DUTY' by the faculties responsible for teaching and upholding teaching standards, that Jamaica has ever witnessed. Obviously, this situation has been going on for quite some time (way too long), because as we have it now, there are 1, 2 or 3 strata of generations with insufficient or no literacy skills. So instead of things getting better, they got worse, and compounded to mind boggling proportions. They (the teaching faculty, the

teaching body of Jamaica) dropped the ball. They must be made to pick it up. Not by looking for short cuts, diversions and deflection from the true issues and problems. But by rolling up their sleeves and getting right in to this problem that they created or have left to fester to these huge proportions. They very much must acknowledge that they went wrong, where and when they went wrong, then go back and clean up this mess.

➤ There should be no more entertaining of cruel frivolity, superficial tendencies and fluffy talk. There should be no more accommodation of laxity and mediocrity. The people need to learn Standard English. (Jamaica's official Language). They must be brought to proficiency in literacy and function. They must be told the truth about the language of the world, and the language of commerce. If people can't read, can't read and write English, they also can't read Patois. (Or anything else!!)

➤ What now...? Grace • 6 years ago. 'There should be no more entertaining of cruel frivolity, superficial tendencies and fluffy talk. There should be no more accommodation of laxity and mediocrity.' Grace, IN PLAIN ENGLISH... What does this mean? Please, I need to know.

➤ Annie Paul • 6 years ago. You're asking the wrong question. It's not "What do the pro-Patois-teaching proponents hope to gain from this?" but "What do the anti-Patwa brigade stand to lose by the Jamaican mother tongue being legitimized". That is the question to ask. No one is proposing that English shouldn't be taught, the proposal is that Patwa should be acknowledged as the language of the people, and that in order to teach English and other subjects better Patwa should be utilized. What do you have against that Mr. Roach?

➤ Tony Hall Annie Paul • 6 years ago. Brilliantly put, Annie.

➤ Grace Annie Paul • 6 years ago. Annie Paul are you listening to yourself? "...better Patwa should be utilized." What is better Patwa? I wish you could describe that for me, and make an illustrative comparison to 'worse Patwa' for us. Better Patwa should be utilized to do what?

➤ Douglass1123 Annie Paul • 6 years ago. I don't think the issue is the legitimisation of Patois...Mr Roach did acknowledge that every Jamaican somehow learns it. Consequently, it does not need to be taught. The problem is that a lot of school age children in the lower socio-economic strata of our society are not able to speak English at all. So we MUST teach English in order to maintain some semblance of equanimity between ourselves & the rest of the world.

➤ Shawn • 6 years ago. Patois is not standardized, meaning the dialect is different in many parishes. To teach patois would be an even greater challenge for teachers. I do not think it should be taught in schools.

➤ Jacque Shawn • 6 years ago. This is so true Shawn and the costs involved in the standardization process will put further (unnecessary) strain on an already financially 'crippled' nation.

➤ stoneyage • 6 years ago. Do some research. In most language communities the mother tongue is recognized and may even be accorded the status of national or official language. Once English is seen as separate and distinct, students would make more of an effort to learn the rules that govern it, and it would also be taught as a foreign language. It is the mistaken belief that English is our mother tongue, and the refusal to extricate our 'Patwa' from it, that is causing the confusion and failure in the education system.

➤ Ace Itizen stoneyage • 6 years ago. Sorry Stoneyage, h'English IS our mother tongue whether you like it or not. Patois is a car accident of a language, basing its roots in English (Olde English at that), Spanish, Indian, Gaelic (from the plantation oversees who were primarily Scotch & Irish), the various African dialects that came with the slave trade and any other significant ethnic groups that inhabit(ed) our wonderful country. The one common denominator in all the above influences is English, which

allowed the various groups to communicate with one another & get on with life. Having said that, Patois/Patwa (we cannot even agree on the proper spelling of it, which further supports my case that Jamaica cannot afford to make it our "National" language) is a very important part of our heritage and it must be preserved at all costs, much in the same way that Ireland preserves its own dialect of Gaelic (a language spoken/used by Wales, Scotland, Ireland and other distinct ethnic groups across middle Europe into northern Spain, each with their own way of speaking it). But make it our national language???

➤ St. Marian Ace Itizen • 6 years ago. Thank you Ace, the sad fact is that so many persons are saying that this is our 'mother tongue' and that we are trying to run away from an aspect of our Blackness. What a ridiculous argument. Personally, I have nothing against Creole; I speak it regularly in my intimate circle of friends and family. Like you, I believe in its preservation. But, when I hear these arguments I have to remind these supporters that the Jamaican Creole is an attempt (and a failed one at that) to communicate in English. And that is the truth and nothing but the truth. If we must reconnect with our Blackness, let us do so in Igbo or Swahili. The truth is that English is JUST as available to the Jamaican people as the local Creole. The fact that you and I can communicate in English underscores this point. Furthermore, for these people to state that the average Jamaican is not able to understand when others speak in English is just disingenuous since that would mean that most Jamaicans have not been able to understand the news, weather, sports, commentaries, the Manatt Enquiry, the FINSAC Enquiry, and much much more for many many years! What we have is a FAILURE in the English departments. The fact is that these FAILURES are also evident in the Math, Science, Social Studies, Chemistry, and Physics departments. Yet, you here no-one saying that these children have to learn how to speak Creole in order to understand the language of Math!

➤ Bernie Ace Itizen • 6 years ago. Ace please note that German in the German language is Deutsch". If in the Patwah language Patois is "Patwah" or "Patwa", is anything linguistically or phonetically wrong with that? We have not yet standardized the spelling of any of our Patwah words neither have we had any formal meeting to reach a consensus on how we should spell the words in this language. So it is not true or fair to say we cannot even agree on the proper spelling of the words that make up our mother tongue. If we should look more closely at this word, it would be reasonable to say that the last syllable (wah/wa) is derived from the English word "what" and so if we should choose to spell it this way: "Patwha" nothing would be wrong with that either. I hope that by now you realize that we are the ones who set standards we create the rules, teach them and choose to live by them. What I find amazing or even quite shocking is that an entire nation would actually turn down the opportunity to developed and put into writing their own language. No wonder when we look around us we cannot see one single piece of technology that was invented or even made better by any of us. If we have everything in place to develop and put into writing something as important as a language, something that distinguish us form all other living thing and we cannot see any benefits or importance in doing that then something is wrong with us mentally and otherwise.

➤ KAM • 6 years ago. I must articulate my concurrence with Mr. Roach for we live in a global village and it is language that makes this possible. Recently, I saw a bookmark printed with some verse of the Jamaican Bible in Patios. At first sight I thought it was Spanish but when I began to read there were no familiar Spanish words then I realized what language it was. If it was so difficult for me to even recognize much more to read our own language in written form just imagine how challenging it would be for a child. Let us be frank as much as we love and accept out Jamaican language we must recognize that it is a spoken and not a written language.

➤ tameka • 6 years ago. Sorry but i disagree if patio is a dialect why isn't English consider a dialect? I believe Jamaica should teach both languages.

➤ Grace tameka • 6 years ago. An undeniable reality which some people are trying to look the other way from is that if and when one is taught Standard English (in a Jamaican environment where Patois is liberally used and spoken at large) and one learns Standard English well, they automatically will have learned Jamaican Patois to a very high, if not the highest of its potential. That is undeniable. So some

can beat around the bush as much as they want. They can remain busy and frantic, trying to prove a very lame and fraught with holes argument about Patois. Teach English and get English and Patois. How many such great deals does one come across now a days? Two for One special! Teach English and you would have already also taught Patois. " Kill two birds with one stone."

➤ Luke • 6 years ago. I couldn't agree with you more. You don't hear people in England advocating for Cockney to be an official language. Let's say someone living in Jamaica works for a company that does business internationally with English-speaking countries, wouldn't that person need to know English in order to communicate and perform their duties? Patois is learned at home and outside of school.

➤ Ryan • 6 years ago. i support you 100% because patios is not standard

➤ Shari • 6 years ago. Again, this is an interesting perspective. English is so universal that most people are running towards it - not running from it. Pamphlets advertising English classes (for which one has to PAY) are being widely distributed in major US cities because of the influx of so many non-English speaking immigrants. No English means no meaningful job. Also noteworthy is that due to the onslaught of refugees, Italy now has a new law: No proficiency in Italian- no work permit. Using patois in the entertainment industry, or providing jobs for those proficient in the dialect within the confines of the island, unfortunately will not "cut it".

➤ jamjedi • 6 years ago. Teaching patois (literacy) is NOT equal to not teaching English. I wonder what happens to so many Jamaican's brains when they hear the words 'teach' and 'patois' in one sentence? English being the language of international commerce, due to Britain's masterful imperialism, hasn't prompted the Chinese, or Japanese to ignore their own tongues while learning English. Yet, as of today, they have the world's second and third strongest economies. So the idea that you have to be mono-lingual in English to succeed is basically refuted right there. It seems far more important to have a strong cultural bonds, EFFECTIVE education, and a sense of shared identity and equality among the people as both Japan and China have. Of course, we are not quite at that point in Jamaica where a class system despises anything or any person not in close enough alignment with our former colonial masters. Therefore our language, born from the passing of English through an African sieve, is often viewed as the epitome of corruption of a pure ideal. It is true that speaking patois comes naturally to most Jamaicans BUT reading it does NOT. Neither speaking British English NOR reading it comes naturally to many. English should ABSOLUTELY be taught and should eventually have more hours allotted to teaching it than any other language. However, the basic skills involved in reading a language represented by an alphabet largely transfer from one to another. So it should be clear where the most accessible starting point lies: literacy in what is spoken naturally, patwa. Finally, we should not forget the empowerment that comes from the dignification rather than denunciation of a child's native language and culture. We're approaching half a century of 'independence' and Britain has long cut the umbilical cord (we need a VISA to see our Queen). At this point, we should be mature enough to make self-interested decisions without concern for colonial ideology or aspirations toward cultural 'Englishness'. A so mi se!

➤ Grace • 6 years ago. Patois hasn't been born as a full language yet. It hasn't been developed and formalised to work and function on its own as a full and rounded language yet. Patois is not full enough, by which to be used as the communication vehicle to teach the many and various other subjects needed to be learned in life and to ascend in thid world. They (the teaching faculty) are sending so many mixed messages, and mixing up so many issues. If they don't know better and are not doing better than this, it is no wonder that the country is in such a state of decline (in regards to language and literacy). Developing and advancing Patois is one thing. But talking about teaching Patois as a means to tackle illiteracy and the degradation of education is quite another. The two are very different issues and also VERY DIFFERENT VENTURES. Please don't get this twisted, or more twisted. Misunderstanding that, or inadequately assessing this situation/problem will only lead to further disaster, more waste of time and complete fallout in the Jamaican society and their means by which to communicate and function.

➤ Sinnombre • 6 years ago. The argument is if you were to teach a child in Patois, the language they understand, they would more quickly learn mathematics, science, etc. If the child must learn English at the same time he/she is learning these other subjects, progress would be slower. This may be true and it would obviously benefit poor children. Beyond this, there is also the argument that Patois needs to develop as a written language, complete with a more formalized grammatical structure to enhance its respectability as a language of Jamaica. Like you, I am more dubious about this argument, if it means Patois would continue to be imposed on all children, even after they have gained proficiency in English.

➤ ,Sean H. Sinnombre • 6 years ago. If Patois is learned by children then why not just teach them English and be done? There is no particular benefit in using Patois to teach English or any other language. Developing Patois into a written language sounds like another easy way to score a debatably useless PhD.

➤ Maxtop123 Sean H. • 6 years ago. Let us face facts. Patois is the FIRST language of most. So using it in the classroom has to happen. I know. I have had to use it to explain things to student they fail to understand in English. English needs to be taught as a second language. The advocates of Jamaican Creole support bilingual education, patois and English. We need to stop believing that English is our mother tongue. It is not unless our parents raised us on English and this is not the case for most Jamaicans.

Sinnombre Sean H. • 6 years ago. I don't think you understood my comment. If a child is not fluent in English, forcing them to learn math and science in English is silly. They are better off learning those subjects in Patois. When they are proficient, instruction should change to English. Furthermore, as I stated previously, I am not personally in favour of spending the resources developing Patois as a respectable language; but, that is because I am an engineer. My colleagues in literature, or linguistics would surely disagree.

➤ Omugabe • 6 years ago. "No one has to teach a Jamaican child Patois; that is natural. "???"  
You can't be serious.

- 1) There is not such thing as a 'natural language' that is not taught.
- 2) Teaching Patwa DOES NOT mean not teaching English.
- 3) Jamaicans are already bi-lingual in BOTH Patwa & English.
- 4) Only thing needed is to formalize Patwa in every way; and make Jamaican children become literate in their Mother Tongue
- 5) Every Jamaican child will benefit from being bilingually literate, not just your "poor".
- 6) Being literate in more than one languages, makes one smarter not dumber!
- 7) When a Patwa-speaking child knows how to put letters to the sounds/words of the language he speaks MOSTLY, then that experience is liberating & educational.
- 8) Again, BOTH Patwa & English should be taught!
- 9) "Teaching Patois undermines" ignorance! And not just in the "poor" either. "Patois is a very unique and colourful dialect and should be preserved and protected, but should not be used to limit the potential of our people." Making children literate in their Mother Tongue, liberates them; not 'limit the potential'. Patrick Roach, your problem with teaching Patwa is obviously the product of the beastly British brainwashing & mis-education. All the problems you believe that comes with teaching Jamaican children their Mother Tongue, are delusional. They really have nothing to do with making Children literate in their Mother Tongue, Patwa.

➤ Altimc • 6 years ago. I agree with Mr Roach, there is not a child in Jamaica who doesn't understand when spoken to in English, why then force the issue of teaching Patwa/Patois the people who are advocating this concept is most selfish and self serving. Albanian woman here in the States beg me and my friend to help her with English as it would do her well in any European Country she had to pass through as it is the standard, we have one foot in that language why not encourage the other instead of taking what I would call a backward step

- noshel • 6 years ago. Mr Roach. You are joking. I bet you would be as shocked to see that those who you would like to teach English to cant even write their own language!.. that's a problem!.. English should be taught but one must be able to master their own language in both reading writing and speaking it!. No one is against the teaching of English!. all we are saying we should allowed our children to master their mother tongue .
- Dmcl363 • 6 years ago. Patois is the everyday language of the underclass and provides no opportunities for technical training or professional development. But then, one needs no more than patois to be a politician or a gunman.
- Garfield Anthony • 6 years ago. Mr Editor I must say I enjoy reading the different comments and perspectives that people have, but I have a problem with comments that are so long, even longer than the original article. Why not limit the responses to a specific amount of words and encourage some of these writers to submit articles directly to the editor for publication and discussion.
- Cecil De Santos • 6 years ago. I agree with the writer. I have made similar suggestions when there was an article about printing the Bible in Patois. I grew up in Jamaica and when I was in college my language was still poor thank to Patois, even though we did not learn it in school. I got away from it however and you would not catch me using it. I will read it in the Jamaican papers and understand it but I will never use it again in a conversation. The good thing is that Jamaicans always understand English even if some of them don't speak it that well. Keep English in the schools and let patois continue where it is develop ... In the home.

## Annex F. CXC Exam paper Sample

### SECTION I

#### DIRECTED SITUATIONS

#### ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Write in SPANISH the information required for each of the situations given below. Do not write more than ONE sentence for each situation. A complete sentence MAY not be necessary. Do NOT translate the situation given.

**CANDIDATES WILL BE PENALISED FOR DISREGARDING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.**

1. It is your friend's birthday and you send him a photo of himself in place of a birthday card. What do you write at the back of the photo?
2. You are in Mexico on an exchange visit. Send an email to your friend telling her of something you like about your new environment.
3. You send a card to your brother abroad who is about to write an important exam. What do you write?
4. You are designing your own invitation for your birthday party. What do you write?
5. You are chatting online with your friends and they ask you to do something. Explain why it is inappropriate.
6. You send an email to your aunt who lives abroad informing her of something special you would like to do when you visit her. What do you write?
7. Your father has left a note reminding you of a task which he would like you to complete. What does the note say?
8. A secret admirer is shy and wishes to invite you on a date. Write the note which he/she sends to you.
9. Your cousin has lost a competition and is very upset. Write a note of encouragement that you send to him / her.
10. The security guard at your school has unjustly accused you of something. Write a note to the principal explaining how you feel about it.

Total 30 marks

### SECTION

### II

#### LETTER/COMPOSITION

**ANSWER ONE QUESTION ONLY** Using ONE of the following outlines as a guide, write in SPANISH, a letter OR composition of NO MORE THAN 130 - 150 words. Use the tense or tenses appropriate to the topic which you have chosen **CANDIDATES WILL BE PENALISED FOR DISREGARDING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.**

#### EITHER

#### LETTER

You have just spent a weekend with your class doing research in a part of your country where you do not live. Write a letter to your brother / sister studying abroad and include

- (i) when, where and why you visited
- (ii) the preparations you made for the weekend
- (iii) how you and your classmates felt during the visit
- (iv) an unexpected event that occurred while you were there.



(Do NOT write your real name and address, but include the date in SPANISH and use the appropriate beginning and ending.)

**OR**

### **COMPOSITION**

Write a composition about a film you saw and liked. Be sure to include

- you
- (i) the name of the cinema where the film was shown and the person(s) who accompanied you
  - (ii) the name of the film and what it was about
  - (iii) the name of the actor who impressed you the most and why
  - (iv) what you liked best about the outing.

Total 30 marks

### **SECTION III**

### **CONTEXTUAL**

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT/CONTEXTUAL DIALOGUE**

Use the cues provided to complete EITHER an announcement OR a dialogue.

**EITHER**

**CONTEXTUAL**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

Use the following information to write an announcement of about 80 – 100 words in SPANISH.

It is Teachers' Appreciation Day and the Spanish Club is hosting an event to honour Spanish teachers at your school. Write the announcement which will be read at the Students' Council Meeting.

Responses to all of the cues indicated below **MUST** be included in the announcement.

- (i) The activity planned and the purpose
- (ii) Time and venue
- (iii) The arrangements that will be made to allow students to attend
- (iv) A request for a monetary contribution towards buying gifts for the teachers
- (v) An invitation to all students to participate.

**OR**

#### **III – CONTEXTUAL DIALOGUE**

Using 80 – 100 words on the INSERT provided, complete the dialogue between Soledad and her neighbour, Julio, giving Soledad's responses.

You have moved to a new town and are meeting our neighbor for the first time.

Responses to all of the cues below **MUST** be included in the completed dialogue.

- (i) Greetings and identification
- (ii) Reason(s) for moving
- (iii) What you like most about your new neighbourhood
- (iv) What you miss about your former neighbourhood
- (v) Plans to do something together

Attach this INSERT to your answer booklet.

**Total 20 marks**

## ANNEX G

**SPANISH- CSEC Performance by Public Schools' Students - 2007-2016**

2007				2008			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
3799	3614	2455	67.9	4067	3903	2825	72.4
2009				2010			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
4150	3970	2898	73.0	4002	3848	2551	66.3
2011				2012			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
3817	3663	2719	74.2	4038	3896	2815	72.3
2013				2014			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
3928	3839	2922	76.1	3906	3802	2688	70.7
2015				2016			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
3940	3851	2726	70.8	4033	3950	2828	71.6

**SPANISH- CAPE Performance by Public Schools' Students - 2013-2016**

2013				2014			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
217	209	203	97.1	227	225	204	90.7
2013				2014			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
150	149	137	91.9	193	185	161	87.0
2015				2016			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
228	220	208	94.5	206	194	174	89.7
2015				2016			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
180	175	156	89.1	176	171	146	85.4
2015				2016			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
228	220	208	94.5	206	194	174	89.7
2015				2016			
ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED	ENTERED	SAT	PASSED	% PASSED
180	175	156	89.1	176	171	146	85.4

**Source:** Education Statistics. Ministry of Education, Jamaica.